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The Algerian War of Independence in Algerian bande dessin&#65533;e

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The Algerian War of Independence in Algerian *bande dessinée*

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in French and Francophone Studies

by

Veronica Katherine Dean

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Algerian War of Independence

in Algerian *bande dessinée*

by

Veronica Katherine Dean

Doctor of Philosophy in French and Francophone Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Lia N. Brozgal, Chair

"The Algerian War of Independence in Algerian *bande dessinée*" is animated by the question of how *bande dessinée* from Algeria represent the nation's struggle for independence from France. Although the war is represented extensively in *bande dessinée* from France and Algeria, French texts are more well-known than their Algerian counterparts among scholars and *bédéphiles* alike. Catalysts behind this project are the disproportionate awareness and study of French *bande dessinée* on the war and the fact that critical studies of Algerian *bande dessinée* are rare and often superficial. This project nevertheless builds upon existing scholarship by problematizing its assumptions and conclusions, including the generalization that Algerian *bande dessinée* that depict the war are in essence propagandistic in nature. Employing tools of comics analysis and inflecting my research with journalistic work coming out of Algeria, this project attempts to rectify the treatment of Algerian *bande dessinée* in critical scholarship by illustrating

the rich tradition of historical representation in the medium.

Using the theoretical lens of genre theory, this project establishes and explores what I call the Algerian War Genre as a way to understand the corpus of texts on the war and to elevate Algerian *bande dessinée* to the status of art that merits analysis. Each of the three chapters examine examples of the Algerian War Genre. The flexible and mutable criterion of the Algerian War Genre is a strength of this study because it encourages diversity among texts in terms of format, decade of publication, and content. The framework of genre spans the project, while individual chapters engage with genre theory and comics theory to different extents. The chapters are organized by *bédéiste* in order to draw attention to their individual contributions to the medium and the genre as its pioneers.

The dissertation of Veronica Katherine Dean is approved.

Dominic R. Thomas

Laure Murat

Nouri Gana

Lia N. Brozgal, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2020

For my parents and my grandparents.

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"*BD* and 8 May: Rewriting Franco-Algerian History in *bande dessinée*." Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association (PAMLA) 112th Annual Conference, Riverside, CA: 31 Oct. 2014.

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INTRODUCTION

La bande dessinée algérienne: Drawing the nation vis-à-vis the war for independence

This project is animated by the question of how *bande dessinée* from Algeria represent the nation's struggle for independence from France. Among the bloodiest decolonization conflicts of the twentieth century, the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962) is taken up in cultural productions from both countries, and in various media. Although the war is represented extensively in *bande dessinée* from France and Algeria, French texts are more well-known than their Algerian counterparts among scholars and *bédéphiles* alike. The disproportionate awareness and study of French *bande dessinée* on the war is the catalyst behind this project, which necessitated conducting research in France to locate and access Algerian exemplars. Many of the Algerian works in this study never circulated in the United States or widely in France where they were, however, acquired by institutions like the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* (BnF), the *Institut du monde arabe*, and the library of the *Centre Culturel Algérien* in Paris where I found many of the project's primary texts. Visiting Parisian *bande dessinée* specialty shops and inquiring about their Algerian offerings usually produced tangentially related texts at best (e.g. works from the Arab world like *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi or the *bande dessinée* adaptation of *L'Étranger* by Albert Camus); my questions often prompted the response: *la bande dessinée algérienne, ça existe?* The lack of familiarity with Algerian texts or creators among Parisian *bédéphiles* is all the more surprising when considering that my research was conducted in the years following the 2013 exposition on Algerian *bande dessinée* at Angoulême, France's

foremost *bande dessinée* festival.[1]

From its inception, the European *bande dessinée* seems to have been interested in the representation of imperialism. As Mark McKinney shows in *The Colonial Heritage of French Comics*, the invention of the *bande dessinée* is generally credited to the Swiss artist Rodolphe Töpffer, whose *Histoire de Monsieur Cryptogame* from 1830 is partially set in Algeria during the French invasion (15).[2] The colonial tradition continues in the twentieth century, as exemplified by the Tintin series by Belgian author-artist Hergé.[3] According to comics scholar Anne Miller, the *aventurier* figure of Tintin embodies the French civilizing mission ("Les Héritiers d'Hergé: The Figure of the Aventurier in a Postcolonial Context" 307). Miller also argues that *bande dessinée* is even considered to be a reflection of French national identity, as seen in the well-known example, *Astérix,* which she identifies as "part of the mythology of Frenchness" (*Reading Bande Dessinée: Critical Approaches to French-Language Comic Strip* 150).[4]

No such historical overview of the Algerian *bande dessinée* exists to show how, on the other side of the colonial relationship, Algerian *bédéistes* express national identity through the

[1] For more on that year's festival, see Priscille Lafitte's article in *France24* (www.france24.com/fr/20130131-bande-dessinee-nouvelle-bd-nait-algerie-expose-festival-angouleme).

[2] See Laurence Grove's "BD Theory Before the Term 'BD' Existed" for more on the origins of the *bande dessinée* and this work.

[3] McKinney's *The Colonial Heritage of French Comics* should be consulted for more information on *bande dessinée* from the colonial era as well as how the re-publication of colonial-era texts has endured in France.

[4] Matthew Screech's *Masters of the ninth art: bandes dessinées and Franco-Belgian identity* provides a focused study of French national identity in the medium, as does Miller's "Postcolonial Identities" in *Reading Bande Dessinée* for national and postcolonial identities.

medium. In fact, *bédéistes* from Algeria continue to express Algerian-ness, rewrite the nation's history, and confront its colonial past in *bande dessinée* more than 50 years after independence. This project demonstrates that the Algerian *bande dessinée* has a penchant for representing the nation's history, particularly the Algerian War of Independence, throughout the medium's history. The war figures prominently in the first albums and magazines of the medium published in Algeria as early as the 1960s. The tradition of depicting the war continues in the 1980s in albums whose titles—take, for example, *Les hommes du djebel* (1985) by Mustapha Tenani and *Les enfants de la liberté* (1986) by Brahim Guerroui—herald the nationalist sentiments of the war. Furthermore, it has been posited by Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas that the Algerian War of Independence dominates how history is transmitted in Algerian *bande dessinée* and can be understood as a paradigm through which all of Algerian history passes ("The Algerian Strip and Bilingual Politics" 72-73).[5] Considering this paradigm put forth by Douglas and Malti-Douglas, albums such as *L'Émir Abdelkader* (1983) by Benattou Masmoudi therefore depict resistance to the French in the nineteenth century using the same anti-colonial discourse of the war for decolonization. This is also true in the case of albums like *Jughurtha* (1990) by Ali Moulay that depict Algeria's distant past, and where characters like Jughurtha, the anti-Roman Numidian prince, epitomize the anti-colonial resistance fighter.[6] Representations of resistance link these works of historical representation with the modern political moment when they were

[5] This chapter first appeared in *Arab Comic Strips: Politics of an Emerging Mass Culture* (1994), edited by Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas, before being reworked and published in *Cartooning in Africa* (2009), edited by John Lent; I cite the 2009 version of the chapter throughout this project.

[6] The popular character Jughurtha appears in *M'Quidèch* (1971) in stories by Hebrihqui and later in francophone and arabophone albums by Ali Moulay, according to Ameziane Ferhani (*50 Ans de bande dessinée algérienne et l'aventure continue* 38-39).

written and drawn. This project argues that, in the Algerian context, the Algerian War of Independence is uniquely intertwined with the medium's history and its modes of expression, therefore inviting a critical study of the war in the medium.

Known as the Ninth Art, *bande dessinée* is a pop culture phenomenon in the Francophone world. The medium of *bande dessinée* continues to gain traction in literary and cultural studies due to the medium's growing popularity and a body of scholarship dating back to the 1960s in the European context. However, critical studies of Algerian *bande dessinée* are rare and often superficial.[7] I nevertheless build upon existing scholarship by problematizing its assumptions and conclusions, including the generalization that Algerian *bande dessinée* are in essence propagandistic in nature (see analysis below). Employing tools of comics analysis and inflecting my research with journalistic work coming out of Algeria, this project attempts to rectify the treatment of Algerian *bande dessinée* in critical scholarship by illustrating the rich tradition of historical representation in the medium. In what follows, I contextualize the history of the war before sketching out the history of *bande dessinée* in Algeria; I then turn to the existing scholarship on these texts in order to introduce my theoretical lens and illustrate what I call the Algerian War Genre.

The Algerian War of Independence: A short history

The Algerian War of Independence is a contested chapter of Franco-Algerian history due to a myriad of factors on both sides, including how scholarship has treated the war and its combatants. In his 2006 monograph, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*, historian

[7] Lazhari Labter argues that existing scholarship on the Algerian *bande dessinée* is not only scant but often incorrect (*Panorama de la bande dessinée algérienne 1969-2009* 13-14).

Alistair Horne discusses the difficulty of addressing the war in its entirety, writing that "since 1954 a mountain of published material has appeared on the Algerian war, the vast majority in France, a discouragingly small proportion in Algeria itself" and that "there exists no single-volume history of the war that is satisfactory in itself (hence the temerity of the present book, undertaken in an attempt to fill at least a corner of the void). Books so far published tend to be partial, either in their sympathies or because dealing with only a portion of the overall picture" (581). Rather than attempting that which books have not successfully accomplished, the following is an overview of the Algerian War of Independence with an emphasis on the elements most germane to this project. This historical overview relies on existing scholarship on the war, including *Histoire dessinée de la guerre d'Algérie* (2016), an *album de bande dessinée* illustrated by Sébastien Vassant and written by historian Benjamin Stora. That this album-cum-history exists in the medium and is readily available in French bookstores highlights the accessibility of French texts on the war.

The Algerian War of Independence began on 1 November 1954 and ended on 18 March 1962 with the ceasefire declared by the Évian Accords. True to the nature of this conflict, even the start of the war is up for debate. Many scholars and historians now cite the Sétif massacre of 8 May 1945 as the origins of the war since this tragedy brought to light the possibility of

liberation; the massacre was a VE-Day celebration turned repression.[8] Following the end of World War II—in which France's colonial subjects fought for France—the colonial project began to deteriorate.

Fighting began on 1 November 1954 with coordinated attacks across Algeria on sites symbolic of French colonial authority. This night of violence resulted in seven deaths and became known as "La Toussaint rouge". The thirty nearly simultaneous attacks that night were the work of the *Front de libération nationale* (FLN), an organized Algerian nationalist movement. As seen in Figure 1, the aftermath of "La Toussaint rouge" is shown on a two-page spread in Benjamin Stora and Sébastien Vassant's *Histoire dessinée de la guerre d'Algérie* (20-21).[9] This spread opens with a facsimile of the newspaper *L'Echo d'Alger* (see Figure 1, left page, top) in which future French president and then Interior Minister François Mitterrand's declaration was printed, reading: "L'Algérie, c'est la France. Et la France ne reconnaît pas chez elle d'autre autorité que la sienne" (20.1). In addition to this declaration, France sent an additional 26,000 troops to French Algeria as a response to the attacks (Stora and Vassant 20.2). *Histoire dessinée de la guerre d'Algérie* employs a striking image to describe the situation in Algeria in 1954: a frame contains a drawing of a rifle under which reads "Ceci n'est pas une

[8] Today, many historians are retrospectively considering 8 May 1945 as a precursor to, if not the beginning of, the Algerian War for independence; see *A Savage War of Peace* by Horne and *La Guerre d'Algérie,* edited by Harbi and Stora. See Rey-Goldzeiguer's *Aux origines de la guerre d'Algérie, 1940-1945: de Mers-El-Kébir aux massacres du Nord-Constantinois* for the repression beyond Sétif (e.g. Guelma). The date 8 May 1945 marks the official end of World War II in Europe as well as the Sétif massacre in French Algeria. The history of 8 May in Sétif continues to be contested, with varying explanations of how a celebration of the Allied victory turned to calls for Algerian liberation, and how the situation escalated violently and resulted in French bombing of the Sétif region. The exact number of Algerian casualties remains unknown, and estimates range from the thousands to forty thousand.

[9] The image in Figure 1 is a photograph I took of *Histoire dessinée de la guerre d'Algérie*; this is the case for all figures featuring images from this text.

guerre" (see Figure 1, left page, bottom right) (20.5). A play on Rene Magritte's famous painting "Ceci n'est pas une pipe", this image similarly challenges the possibility of reconciling words, images, and objects.[10] The increased presence of the French is represented visually by the image of the rifle, but the words underneath it—"Ceci n'est pas une guerre" (Stora and Vassant 20.5)—reflect the official messaging on the conflict. The war's contested status is due, in part, to how the war was discussed—or not discussed—as it was happening. The war carried euphemistic names during its duration (and long afterward, as discussed below) due to a set of complex factors, one of which being that France and Algeria were but one nation at the time, as summarized in the declaration "L'Algérie, c'est la France" (Stora and Vassant *Histoire dessinée de la guerre d'Algérie* 20.1).[11]

[10] The Surrealist masterpiece "La trahison des images" ("Ceci n'est pas une pipe") (1929, Belgium) [or "The Treachery of Images" ("This is Not a Pipe")] by René Magritte (Belgium, 1898-1967) is held at LACMA (collections.lacma.org/node/239578).

[11] In *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France*, Todd Shepard unravels the complicated and paradoxical ways that France assigned identities to the diverse people in Algeria from 1830 until the early 1960s, a period during which "France asserted that Algeria was an extension of French national territory and that its native-born inhabitants were national subjects; for most of that period, when and whether most Algerians would become citizens remained an unresolved question" (19).

Figure 1: *Histoire dessinée de la guerre d'Algérie* (2016) illustrates the aftermath of "La Toussaint rouge" (Stora and Vassant 20-21).

This spread also indicates the role of the French army at this point in the conflict (see Figure 1, right page, bottom row): "l'armée pourchasse les indépendantistes et tente d'isoler les 'rebelles'" and "La mission des militaires est d'affaiblir les organisations responsables de la 'Toussaint rouge' de novembre 1954: le FLN et l'ALN" (Stora and Vassant 21.6, 21.7).[12] The *Front de libération nationale* (FLN) was a nationalist movement, and the *Armée de libération nationale* (ALN) was their military arm. Multiple Algerian nationalist movements were born as early as the 1920s: the Oulémas movement was the Arabo-Islamic branch of Algerian

[12] The top row of this same page also lists a French military function: "La plupart du temps, les soldats s'efforcent de gagner la confiance des populations. C'est le temps de la 'pacification'" (Stora and Vassant 21.1).

nationalism, the *Union démocratique du manifeste algérien* (UDMA) was founded in 1946 by Ferhat Abbas, and the *Étoile nord-africaine* (ENA) was founded in 1926 by Messali Hadj who then created the *Parti du Peuple Algérien* (PPA) in 1937 and then the *Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques* (MTLD) in 1946 (Stora and Vassant 12-13). When the FLN was founded in 1954, it was composed of members from MTLD, the *Organisation spéciale* (OS), the Oulémas, and the *Parti communiste algérien* (PCA) (Stora and Vassant 22-23); other nationalists wanted autonomy from the FLN and created the *Mouvement national algérien* (MNA) in December of 1954 (Stora and Vassant 23). The FLN was one of many nationalist movements that wanted Algerian independence and that operated during the war.

Tens of thousands of people, on both sides, experienced the violent nameless war. On the French side, the French military and the *Organisation de l'armée secrete* (OAS) defended the French presence in French Algeria. On the Algerian side, nationalist militants—FLN or otherwise affiliated—fought for independence using a variety of military tactics including guerilla warfare in the *djebel* (mountains) of Algeria or planned urban attacks like in the Battle of Algiers. Some French settlers (*pied-noirs*) sided with the Algerian cause, while some Algerians supported France (and were termed *harkis*). Fighting ensued across Algeria—and occasionally in mainland France—for seven years with great losses on both sides.

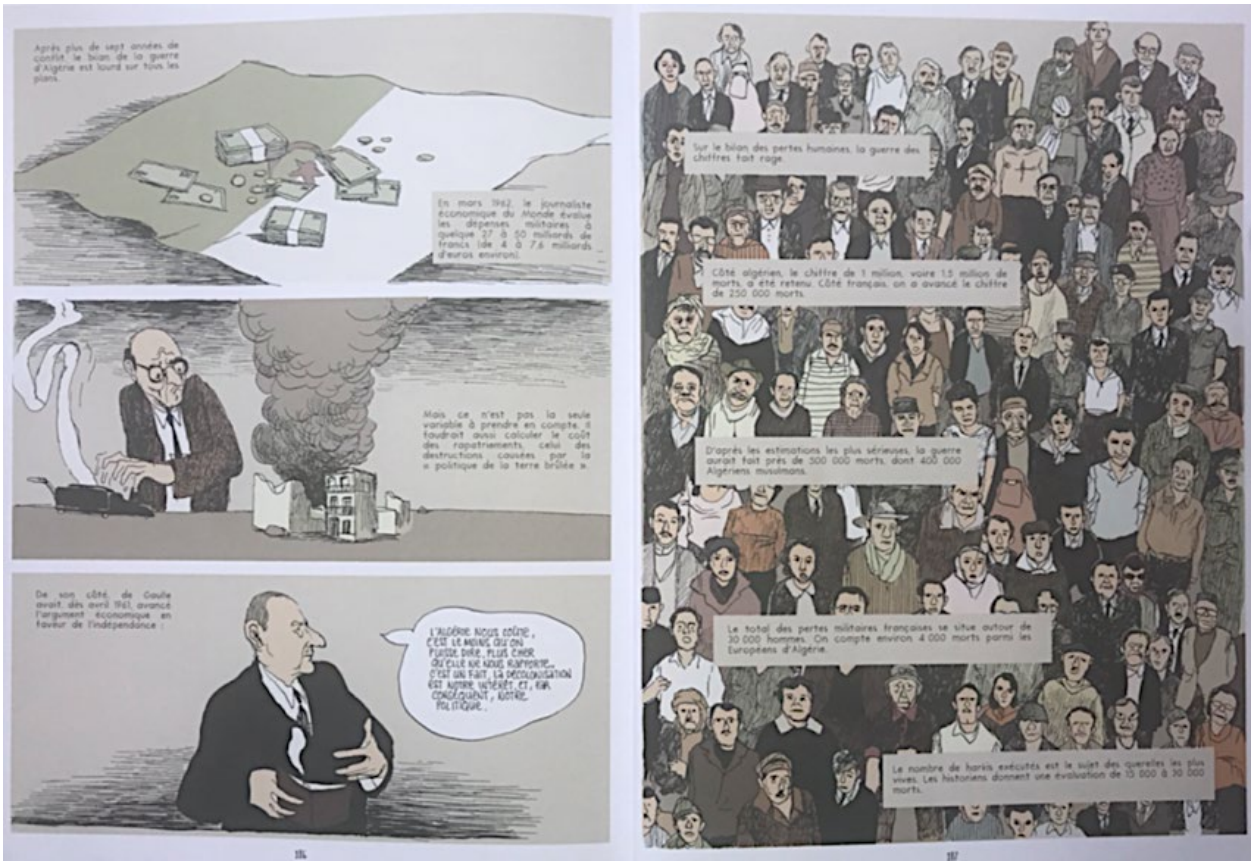

Figure 2: *Histoire dessinée de la guerre d'Algérie* (2016) shows the financial and human costs of the war (Stora and Vassant 186-187).

The financial and human losses of the war brought about its end in early 1962 (see Figure 2). In 1961, French president Charles de Gaulle put forth an economic argument in favor of Algerian independence; by its end, the war had cost billions of Euros, in today's money. As seen in Figure 2 (right page), *Histoire dessinée de la guerre d'Algérie* employs a splash page depicting a sea of humanity onto which the death tolls are inscribed in caption boxes, reading as follows:

> Sur le bilan des pertes humaines, la guerre des chiffres fait rage.
>
> Côté algérien, le chiffre de 1 million, voire 1,5 million de morts, a été retenu. Côté français, on a avancé le chiffre de 250 000 morts.

> D'après les estimations les plus sérieuses, la guerre aurait fait près de 500 000 morts, dont 400 000 Algériens musulmans.
>
> Le total des pertes militaires françaises se situe autour de 30 000 hommes. On compte environ 4 000 morts parmi les Européens d'Algérie.
>
> Le nombre de harkis exécutés est le sujet des querelles les plus vives. Les historiennes donnent une évaluation de 15 000 à 30 000 morts. (Stora and Vassant 189)

These numbers show the overwhelming losses on the Algerian side and point to the disputed nature of statistics pertaining to this war. The war came to an official end with the Évian Accords of 18 March 1962 that called for a ceasefire between France and the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (the government-in-exile of the FLN).

Scholars continue to grapple with the complexity of socio-political and historical factors that preceded the war, the various means of combat (armed conflict, guerilla warfare, torture, etc.) during the war, and the war's aftermath that continues to affect both nations. A double censorship affected the memory of the Algerian War of Independence in France and in independent Algerian. In France, in fact, the war was not recognized as such until 1999 when the *Assemblée nationale française* voted to permit the use of the expression "guerre d'Algérie" (Stora and Vassant 190).[13] In Algeria, the FLN rose to power as the independent nation's only political party. Under the FLN, "Une vision glorieuse du conflit s'impose: celle d'une guerre de 'libération nationale' menée par un peuple uni contre la puissance coloniale française derrière le FLN. La mémoire des opposants du FLN devient un sujet tabou" (Stora and Vassant 189). In *La Gangrene et l'oubli*, Stora goes so far as to argue that the official narrative of a purported unified

[13] The expression "guerre d'Algérie" replaced that of "opérations de maintien de l'ordre" (Stora and Vassant 190).

and homogenous independence movement established a systematic forgetting of national history that undermined postcolonial Algerian society. That the single party shaped the nation, for better or for worse, is clear. The authoritarian rule of the FLN dominated Algerian politics in the decades following independence, and the party remains powerful in Algeria today, despite the Dark Decade (see below) and challenges to the FLN.

***La bande dessinée algérienne*: History of the medium, history in the medium**

"Le neuvième art en Algérie présente la particularité remarquable d'être le seul art né après l'indépendance du pays" according to Algerian journalist Ameziane Ferhani who suggests that "la bande dessinée algérienne, en tant que création, est donc bien la fille de l'indépendance. Fille et enfant unique, peut-on ajouter sans risque de se tromper" (15, 16). The books *Panorama de la bande dessinée algérienne 1969-2009* (2009) by Lazhari Labter and *50 Ans de bande dessinée algérienne et l'aventure continue* (2012) by Ameziane Ferhani are recent journalistic endeavors that celebrate the Ninth Art in Algeria and document its history. My work is indebted to these Algerian publications and the historical record and insight they provide for the medium in Algeria. Using the work of Labter and Ferhani, in what follows, I present the history of *la bande dessinée algérienne* as inseparable from the Algerian War of Independence and its political context. My historical overview identifies the stages in the development of the medium from the 1960s until the 21st century, all the while providing political context and drawing

attention to representations of the Algerian War of Independence that dominate this history.[14]

An important precursor to the development of Algerian comics is that Algerian readers had been exposed to *bande dessinée* from Europe during the colonial era such as the Italian *Blek le roc* series that was set in colonial America. Ferhani notes the role of *Blek le roc* as a place where young Algerians saw "l'expression de sentiments explicites à l'encontre de l'injustice générée par le système colonial" and could apply these feelings to their own colonial situation, positing that:

> La bande dessinée bimensuelle 'Blek le Roc' est symptomatique de ce formidable glissement de sens. Créée justement en 1954, année du déclenchement de la guerre d'indépendance, par trois créateurs italiens (Giovanni Sinchetto, Dario Guzzon et Pietor Sartoris) du studio Esse Gesse, elle a pour héros un trappeur américain d'origine bretonne qui lutte contre les troupes anglaises pour l'indépendance des États-Unis. Le transfert, général à toutes les BD, se faisait ici directement. Dans la tête des petits, et surtout des jeunes lecteurs algériens, Blek le Roc devenait uni sorte d'Ali la Pointe, ce héros de la Bataille d'Alger. (*50 Ans* 18)[15]

Blek le roc was deemed positive for young people and was initially excluded from the ban on foreign comics—and their eventual disappearance from the legal market—under the

[14] Ferhani identifies five steps in the evolution of the Algerian Ninth Art: print press in the 1960s published the first strips and albums, *M'Quidech* in the 1970s, the Bordj El Kiffan festival in the 1980s, the void of the 1990s and early 2000s, and the resurgence of the medium after 2008 (*50 Ans de bande dessinée algérienne* 250-251). My stages align with these for the most part, but I emphasize the albums of the 1980s and the role of the 2003 re-publications by ENAG. In *50 Ans*, Ferhani lists predecessors of Algerian *bande dessinée* as the miniature (21-22), the caricature (20), and "figuration" in other media (10-18).

[15] Ferhani's quotation continues "même s'ils ignoraient qu'un des premiers États au monde à avoir reconnu l'indépendance des États-Unis d'Amérique, en 1776, avait été la Régence d'Alger" to further connect American and Algerian history (*50 Ans* 18).

governments of Ahmed Ben Bella and Houari Boumédienne in the 1960s, although it would eventually be banned like all foreign comics to make way for Algerian stories, according to Labter (*Panorama* 80).

Many *bande dessinée* "firsts" happened in the 1960s in Algeria, from the birth of ideas to publication and circulation. These "firsts" represent the initial stage in the development of Algerian *bande dessinée* in the 1960s under the nation's first two presidents in the single-party system. According to Labter, in 1964, the idea for "un illustré algérien" was born at the *Centre national du cinema* (CNC) in Algiers by Mohamed Aram, Slim, and Ahmed Haroun, who worked on the project until it was cut short by the political turmoil of the summer of 1965 when Houari Boumédienne deposed Algeria's first president Ahmed Ben Bella in a military coup d'état (*Panorama* 48). Another almost "first" was the project by Slim and Mohamed Zinet, who envisioned what Labter calls a *bande dessinée* or *dessin animé* parody of the film *La Bataille d'Alger* titled *La pagaille d'Alger* (*Panorama* 49). Mohamed Aram, Slim, and Ahmed Haroun continued their comics creation after their initial projects never came to fruition, contributing to Algeria's first comic strip, first comic book, and first comic magazine, respectively.

The first Algerian comic strip appeared in *Algérie Actualité* in 1967 with the publication of the first page of *Naâr, une sirène à Sidi Ferruch* by Mohamed Aram. For Labter, this marks the birth of Algerian *bande dessinée* (*Panorama* 49). The *hebdomadaire* published one page of *Naâr* per week for five months, from 19 March until 20 August 1967, but the strip was never published in its entirety for reasons that remain unclear (Labter *Panorama* 52). The themes of occupation, Algerian nationalism, and anticolonialism can be read in the eponymous superhero's battle against extraterrestrial invaders, as Labter observes (*Panorama* 52). The first Algerian *album de bande dessinée* was published in 1968 with *Moustache et les Belgacem* by Slim,

penname of Menouar Merabtene.[16] The 30-page album cost 80 dinar and sold 10,000 copies (Labter *Panorama* 56). The narrative is set during the war, with "VIVE LA REVOLUTION" appearing scrawled onto a building in the album's cover art to announce the setting in the Casbah of Algiers during the Battle of Algiers. The print press was responsible for publishing the first strips and albums.

The following year saw the publication of the first Algerian comics magazine, *M'Quidèch*, thus rounding out the list of "firsts" from the 1960s and marking the second stage in the development of the medium: the era of *M'Quidèch*. The debut issue of *M'Quidèch: Le journal illustré algérien* was published in February of 1969 by *la Société nationale d'édition et de diffusion* (SNED). For Labter, this magazine "marque l'acte de naissance 'officiel' du 9e art en Algérie" due to its creation by a national publisher (*Panorama* 77).[17] Under the watchful eye of the FLN, SNED provided cartoonists with guidelines for creating Algerian heroes, Algerian settings, Algerian content, and Algerian aesthetics (Labter *Panorama* 81). The magazine was a sort of school for young *bande dessinée* apprentices, which, for Ferhani, makes it an important step in the evolution of Algerian comics (*50 Ans* 250). These young cartoonists (ages 18-25) are the pioneers of Algerian comics and the first generation of Algerian cartoonists. Thirty-three issues were published between 1969 and 1974, and an Arabic-only version of the journal was briefly reborn in 1978 (Labter *Panorama* 85-87). The magazine's legacy outlived its short run.

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[16] Ferhani (*50 Ans* 30-31) and Labter (*Panorama* 56) agree that this is the first album, which was published by *Algérie Actualité*.

[17] For Labter, *M'Quidèch* marks the 'official' birth of Algerian comics since it is a national (SNED) publication (*Panorama* 77). However, Douglas and Malti-Douglas consider *M'Quidèch* to be unofficial in comparison to other less famous Algerian children's magazines such as the FLN youth organization's *Jeunesse-Action*, or *Tarik* which was published by the Musée National du Moudjahid ("The Algerian Strip" 68-69); I consider these all to be official and national publications.

The magazine and its state-sanctioned content characterize the decade of the 1970s.

The 1980s saw a move from periodicals to albums after the end of *M'Quidèch*. The album trend marks the third stage in the development of Algerian *bande dessinée*. Albums of all genres enter the comics scene in the early 1980s; some were by authors turned artists, some were new or previously unpublished stories, and others had previously appeared in comics magazines like *M'Quidèch*, according to Labter's records (*Panorama* 200).[18] The Algerian War of Independence figured prominently in the albums of this time, particularly in albums published by state-controlled editors like SNED (*Société nationale d'édition et de diffusion*), ENAL (*Entreprise nationale du livre*), and ENAP (*Entreprise nationale de presse*) who operated under the government of the FLN. Also, the *Festival international de la bande dessinée et de la caricature de Bordj El Kiffan* (1986-1988) re-launched *bande dessinée*, more in terms of promotion than publication and diffusion, as Ferhani posits (*50* 250-251). The album trend of the 1980s is characterized by state-sanctioned content under Chadli Bendjedid whose presidency saw a crash in world oil prices and the resulting social unrest in Algeria.

The 1990s became known as "La Décennie noire" because of the civil war in Algeria. The introduction of a multi-party system in the late 1980s following the violent 1988 October riots brought with it a freedom of creation and the press that, in turn, introduced a trend toward caricatures and political cartooning (which had been less developed under the one-party FLN system) rather than an explosion in *bande dessinée* production (Labter *Panorama* 69). Comics production was sporadic during the Dark Decade when cartoonists, like other intellectuals, artists, and journalists, were targets of attacks in the Algerian Civil War (1991-2002) under the

[18] Between 1981 and 1991, dozens of albums of all genres—francophone and arabophone—were published by SNED, ENAL, ENAP, and ENAG, with SNED publishing the lion's share (Labter *Panorama* 200).

direction of the Front islamique du Salut (FIS).[19] Victims include the *bédéistes* Brahim Guerroui (penname Gébé) and Saïd Mekbel, as well as journalist and cartoonist Mohamed Dorbane (Labter *Panorama* 70-71). Other *bédéistes* took refuge in France, such as Slim and Gyps. Gyps self-published albums of various genres from France such as *Algé Rien*, which discusses the sex life of Algerians, and *Fis end love*, a satirical retracing of Algerian history in the early 1990s; both titles are provocative, with the latter clearly referencing the Front islamique du Salut (FIS). In Algeria, the most notable publication of the decade was the satirical *El-Manchar* (or *La Scie* in French) which, as Labter notes, was singlehandedly maintained from 1990-2000 without financing by Mahfoud Aïder and Mustapha Tenani (*Panorama* 73). The Dark Decade corresponds to the fourth stage in the history of Algerian *bande dessinée* and is marked by sporadic political cartooning and a lack of *bande dessinée* publication.

The early 21st century saw a revival of the comics medium in Algeria following the elections of 1999 that restored the power of Algeria's single party when Abdelaziz Bouteflika became president. This marks the fifth stage in the medium's development when it was revived through two initiatives. First, as part of the *Année de l'Algérie en France*, many *albums de bande dessinée* were re-edited and re-published by ENAG (*Entreprise nationale des arts graphiques*) in 2002 and 2003. These re-editions were originally published from the 1960s until the early 1990s. Second, comics were celebrated with the creation of the *Festival international de la bande dessinée d'Alger* (FIBDA). In 2008, the first FIBDA featured nearly 100 selections from 30 countries, with *Le Dingue au bistouri, commissaire Llob* by Mohamed Bouslah as the most

[19] Labter asserts that the attacks on cartoonists were led by Les Groupes islamiques armés (GIA) and l'Armée islamique du Salut (AIS) under le Front islamique du Salut (FIS) (*Panorama* 70).

notable prize winner from Algeria and recipient of the Bulle de Bronze.[20] Both initiatives were sponsored by the state: the re-edited albums were re-published by a state-controlled publishing house, ENAG, and the FIBDA was led by the *ministère de la Culture* who simultaneously supported the creation of new, independent publishing houses for comics like Éditions Dalimen, Lazhari Labter Éditions, and Laabstore, among others.[21]

For Ferhani, what is remarkable about the first FIBDA in 2008 and the subsequent revival of *bande dessinée* following the festival, is the involvement of both generations of cartoonists—the pioneers and the newcomers (*50 Ans* 28-29). The first-generation cartoonists were born before independence, remember the French colonial presence and the Algerian War, grew up in an environment of nationalist sentiments, and published comics well before the 1990s (Ferhani *50 Ans* 98-99). The second generation grew up during the Dark Decade in an environment influenced by national events as well as globalization and were raised in a visual culture, watching *dessins animés* on satellite television and reading both *bande dessinée* and manga (Ferhani *50 Ans* 138-143).[22]

[20] This album is an adaptation of the novel *Le Dingue au bistouri* by Algerian author Yasmina Khadra. See Labter's *Panorama* (272-273) for more on this album that was published by Éditions Lazhari Labter.

[21] Christophe Cassiau-Haurie's article in *AfriCultures* provides an overview of *bande dessinée* in Algeria through the FIBDA and the creation of new publishing houses.

[22] Web comics and online zines are another manifestation of the medium. According to Massimo di Ricco, the Algerian webzine *12tours* was launched by Kamel Zakour, Rym Mokhtari, and Nawel Louerrad in 2010 with the intent of producing *bande dessinée* in a "censorship-free production space" (193).

Figure 3: This scene from *Le vent de la liberté* shows Sofiane Belaskri's distinct style of rendering images (8).

Like the first generation, the second generation of Algerian *bédéistes* also treat the subject of the Algerian War of Independence in their work.[23] As seen in Figure 3, *Le vent de la liberté* by Sofiane Belaskri represents the work of the younger generation of Algerian cartoonists in the medium of *bande dessinée*.[24] Belaskri renders this war story using a manga-inspired style to tell of one Algerian man's decision to become a solider in the resistance—despite his mother's protests, his experiences in combat, and then ultimately of his death at the hands of the French troops. Prior to *Le vent de la liberté* (2012), Belaskri's work told of everyday life in Algeria in manga albums such as *Drahem* (2011), and in his contributions to the Laabstore *revue* that features video games, manga, and cosplay.[25] His shift to representing the past took place after he attended the FIBDA in 2011, where one can assume that his abilities were seen when he debuted *Drahem* (2011) and were sought out to create new works that represent the struggle for independence. *Le vent de la liberté* is the product of an independent publisher under state direction. The album was published in 2012 by Éditions Z-Link (an imprint of Laabstore) and includes the following text on the back cover of the album: "Cet ouvrage a été publié avec le soutien du ministère de la culture à l'occasion du 50ème anniversaire de l'indépendance nationale" (*Le vent de la liberté* n.p.). This recent example demonstrates how the state's hand continues to guide *bande dessinée* creation in Algeria.

In sum, the first five decades of *bande dessinée* creation, production, and circulation in Algeria represent stages in the development of the medium. The stages are as follows: the

[23] Take, for example, the younger cartoonists' group publications *Monstres* and *Waratha* following the first and second FIBDAs, respectively, that feature war stories.

[24] The image in Figure 3 is a photograph I took of *Le vent de la liberté*.

[25] Laabstore is an editor that publishes a *revue* of the same name.

"firsts" in Algerian *bande dessinée* in the 1960s; the dominance of *M'Quidèch* in the early 1970s; the state-published album trend of the 1980s; the lack of *bande dessinée* publication during the Dark Decade in the 1990s; and the revitalization efforts of the early 2000s to re-publish *bande dessinée* and to hold *bande dessinée* festivals in Algiers. The Algerian War of Independence as subject matter and the prominence of national editors/publishers serve as a thread running through the decades of the medium's history, with the "La Décennie noire" representing the only decade that was not governed by the FLN.[26]

Approaches to Algerian *bande dessinée*: Critical Indifference

Let us now turn to the work of two comics scholars from the American academy, Mark McKinney and Jennifer Howell, who have published articles on Algerian comics depicting the war as well as books on French comics depicting the war. I build upon their work in spite of the critical indifference with which they treat Algerian comics depicting the war. Mark McKinney's "The Frontier and the Affrontier: French-Language Algerian Comics and Cartoons Confront the Nation" (2008) and Jennifer Howell's "Illustrating Independence: The Algerian War Comic of the 1980s" (2009) provide focused analyses of war albums from the 1980s and provide the foundation of my exploration of the relationship between these comics and the state.[27] In "The Frontier and the Affrontier: French-Language Algerian Comics and Cartoons Confront the Nation" (2008), Mark McKinney writes that:

[26] Although the FLN was not the single party of this time, the party's influence should be noted in the High Council of State (a military-backed collective presidency). The High Council of State lasted from 1992 until 1999 and was led by three different Chairmen (acting presidents), all of whom had ties to the ALN/FLN.

[27] I use the 2008 English translation of McKinney's article "La frontière et l'affrontière: la bande dessinée et le dessin algériens de langue française face à la nation" (2007) as it contains a 6-page update on comics in Algeria.

> [H]istorical comics published in Algeria before 1988 offer a striking example of the nationalist alignment of artists during that period, and of the support that they gave to the military regime. During this period, the National Liberation Army (ALN) is glorified when the subject of the comic is the Algerian war, the historical foundation of the legitimacy of the military regime and the one-party rule then exercised by the FLN. In these cases, the FLN/ALN, united with the Algerian people, are represented as waging a holy war against the French colonisers (the army and the pieds noirs) and a few Algerian traitors (the harkis). In texts of this type, there is no trace of the origins of nationalism in exile. Rare indeed are allusions to Algerians in France or to other nationalist or militant organisations (L'étoile nord-africaine, the MTLD, the PCA, the MNA), and no reference is made to the suitcase carriers or to other French sympathisers.[28] (189)

Jennifer Howell, in "Illustrating Independence: The Algerian War Comic of the 1980s" (2009), similarly approaches these works and contributes the following on the role of the publishers behind these works:

> Self-perceived as the only political organization capable of ruling the Algerian people, the FLN advocated the *pensée unique*, eliminating discrepancies among political opinions. Hence the need for government-controlled publishing agencies such as the *Société nationale d'édition et de diffusion* (SNED) whose mission was to reproduce and

[28] This excerpt references the following Algerian cartoonists and texts with their titles also translated into English, which are listed in a footnote: Mustapha Tenani, *De nos montagnes* ['From Our Mountains'] (Algiers: SNED, 1981); Benattou Masmoudi, *Le village oublié* ['The Forgotten Village'] (Algiers: ENAL, 1983); Mustapha Tenani, *Les hommes du djebel* ['The Mountain Men'] (Algiers: ENAL, 1985); Brahim Guerroui, *Les enfants de la liberté* ['Children of Freedom'] (Algiers: ENAL, 1986); Mohamed Bouslah, *Pour que vive l'Algérie* ['So that Algeria May Live'] (Algiers: ENAL, 1989) (McKinney "The Frontier and the Affrontier: French-Language Algerian Comics and Cartoons Confront the Nation" 189).

> disseminate official discourses while censuring critiques. Later reorganized as the *Entreprise nationale du livre* (ENAL) in 1983, SNED encouraged politically-engaged works written by FLN militants promoting party ideology. Consequently, numerous publications, including comic books, commemorating the Algerian War of Independence appeared throughout the single-party period. These include Mustapha Tenani's *De nos montagnes* (SNED, 1981) and *Les Hommes du Djebel* (ENAL, 1985), Benattou Masmoudi's *Le Village oublié* (ENAL, 1983), and Brahim Guerroui's *Les Enfants de la liberté* (ENAL, 1986). (23)

The articles similarly establish that historical comics published in Algeria between independence and 1988 were published by state-controlled publishing houses that were tasked with disseminating an official historical account of the war that emphasized the FLN's direction during the war and credited the FLN with the outcome of the revolution, thereby legitimizing the FLN's single-party rule in the decades following independence. McKinney and Howell find these comics to be pro-FLN propaganda, although both articles circumvent the use of the term propaganda.

However, when these postcolonial comics scholars later published in-depth studies of the representation of the Algerian War of Independence in comics, war albums from Algeria played a less than minor role. Consider the following excerpts and their accompanying notes in which the authors make reference to the Algerian albums' role in their projects. Mark McKinney allocates a chapter of *Redrawing French Empire in Comics* (2013) to the war. In the chapter "The Algerian War and its Aftermath", Mark McKinney writes that "Throughout this chapter I continue to focus primarily on comics and graphic novels created by French cartoonists mainly for the French-speaking European comics market. My analysis is also informed by readings of

French-language Algerian comics about the war, although I do not focus on them here" (151). The accompanying endnote reads: "Cf. Douglas and Malti-Douglas (1994); McKinney (2007a, 2008c). I thank Frank Giroud for having generously loaned me two Algerian graphic narratives about the Algerian War (Tenani 1985; Bouslah 1989). Other Algerian comic books about the war that I have consulted include Slim (1968), Tenani (1981), Amouri (1983), Masmoudi (1983) and Guerroui (1986)" (239 n7).[29] It is clear from the verbs McKinney uses in this footnote that Algerian comics are something to merely borrow and consult, whereas French comics are something to study.

While McKinney dedicates one chapter of his book to the war, Jennifer Howell's *The Algerian War in French-Language Comics: Postcolonial Memory, History, and Subjectivity* (2015) is devoted entirely to the Algerian War of Independence. In the introduction, Howell introduces her project, writing that "Building on this scholarship [on memory and the Algerian War], the purpose of my book is to explore a topic only briefly mentioned in Stora's research: the representation of the Algerian War in French comics" (xxvii). This sentence's accompanying endnote states the following:

> My decision to focus on French comics and not Algerian French-language comics is based on the lack of availability and diversity of the latter. Based on my research, the majority of comics on the Algerian War published in Algeria appear during the 1980s, when the Algerian government sought to popularize the revolution and use it to create national unity despite a deepening economic crisis and growing civil unrest in response to the country's failing single-party political system (see Howell 2009). (xxxvi, n12)

[29] McKinney seems to use the terms graphic narratives and comic books interchangeably in this note.

This introductory text and its endnote emphasize the focus on French comics to the exclusion of Algerian comics, despite the indication by the book's title *The Algerian War in French-Language Comics* that French-language Algerian comics could be considered. Moreover, it seems that Howell takes the Algerian government's instrumentalization of comics as reason that these texts are somehow not worth studying.

I include these excerpts from McKinney's *Redrawing French Empire in Comics* and Howell's *The Algerian War in French-Language Comics: Postcolonial Memory, History, and Subjectivity* because their content and form reveal much about the treatment of Algerian comics in the field of comics studies. Although Algerian comics are not the focus of either work in question, both McKinney and Howell briefly refer to Algerian comics on the war to articulate their projects' focus on French comics. In both works, Algerian comics that depict the Algerian War of Independence are relegated to end matter in the form of notes. In his endnote in question, McKinney identifies seven Algerian comics he "consulted" to inform his analysis of the war in French comics; the titles of these Algerian works are located even farther toward the back of the book—in the bibliography—thus twice removed from the body of the main text. For Howell, the endnote contains her reason for not focusing on Algerian comics, although no reference is made to individual titles or authors in her characterization of Algerian comics. The Algerian comics referenced here have no place in the body of the book nor in its bibliography.

Dismissive in form and arguably in tone, these notes also indicate the scarcity of scholarship on the war in Algerian comics. Both McKinney and Howell's endnotes include self-citations. McKinney refers the reader to his 2007 article and its 2008 English translation, and Howell points the reader to her article from 2009. These aforementioned articles establish the State's use of war albums from the 1980s to disseminate an official, pro-FLN version of the war.

That Algerian comics on the Algerian war are treated parenthetically in *Redrawing French Empire in Comics* and *The Algerian War in French-Language Comics* despite their respective authors' previous study of them suggests a critical indifference toward Algerian comics, which seem to be written off as propaganda.

Genre Theory and Imagining an Algerian War Genre

Stephen Neale has developed a theory for addressing the nature of genres in the field of film studies. In *Genre* (1980), Neale posits that "genres are instances of repetition and difference" in which films must conform to the genre's conventions and stereotypes to be identified within that genre but must also subvert the genre's stereotypes enough to be viewed as a unique film (48). In "Questions of Genre" (2012), Neale states that all genres are inherently temporal, with inherent historicity and inherent mutability, which invites a reading of the genre's historical character (187); this mutability means that genres are best understood as processes that are dynamic and always changing (189). For Neale, genre as a phenomenon is not limited to the Hollywood film context, and its concepts apply to other nations' traditions and media (178).[30]

Genre theory is a lens through which comics scholars approach American superhero comic books. Comics studies employs genre theory to assume the distinctive nature of superhero narratives and to identify essential elements that become generic markers (Charles Hatfield et al. *The Superhero Reader* 73-75) or to identify subgenres such as the nationalist superhero subgenre of the superhero genre (Jason Dittmer *Captain America and the Nationalist Superhero* 3-4). In the context of superhero comics, genre is an empirical social reality, a category for

[30] See Alan Williams "Is a Radical Genre Criticism Possible?" for more on genre beyond the Hollywood phenomenon.

organizing works, and a pastime of its audience, according to Hatfield et al. (*The Superhero Reader* 73).

Genre, as conceived by Barry Grant, is a critical term, a collection of popular categories, and one of the most useful conceptual tools for understanding popular film as art and artifact (*Film Genre Reader IV* xviii). This project considers genre as such, but with the aim of understanding Algerian *bande dessinée* as art and artifact. Neale takes up genre and its definitions in *Genre and Hollywood* (2000), arguing that it is difficult to define individual genres in anything other than basic or tautological terms, with the example that "a war film is a film about the waging of war" (219). This difficulty lies in genre's mutability as a dynamic process and the fact that "the repertoire of generic conventions available at any one point in time is always *in* play rather than simply being *re*-replayed" (*Genre and Hollywood* 219). Furthermore, "any generic repertoire always exceeds, and thus can never be exhausted by, any single film" (*Genre and Hollywood* 219), thus meaning that a genre cannot be defined by a single exemplary text.

In this project, and in the analysis below, I apply genre theory to works of Algerian *bande dessinée* treating the Algerian War of Independence to argue for the existence of what I call the Algerian War Genre. As Neale has expressed about defining specific genres, it is difficult to briefly define the Algerian War Genre. In what follows, I sketch out the parameters of the genre by way of definition before turning to issues raised by the genre itself.

For this project and its Algerian War Genre, *bande dessinée* designates the medium of word-image narrative that extends across multiple frames and pages. Political cartoons, although related to *bande dessinée*, are beyond the scope of this project since they often are told in a single frame on a single page. The format of the *bande dessinée* can be strips in periodicals;

stories included in magazines, albums, or other collective publications; or standalone softcover or hardcover albums (known as one-shot albums).[31] Also, a necessary criterion of the Algerian War Genre is that the works in question are created in Algeria by Algerian *bédéistes* and published in Algeria. This definition thus excludes works by Slim, Algeria's best-known *bédéiste*, that were published in France following his self-exile during the Dark Decade—such as his *Retour d'Ahuristan* (Seuil 1997)—which is dedicated to his fellow Algerian artists assassinated during this time.[32] Also excluded are works from *bédéistes* of Algerian origin who were born in France like Azouz Begag and Djillali Defali whose *Leçons Coloniales* (Éditions Delcourt 2012) tells of the Sétif massacre of 8 May 1945. The intent is to draw attention to works from Algeria, which remain understudied and lesser-known than works from France. Works in the Algerian War Genre can come from Algerian publishers and editors including, but not limited to: *Algérie Actualité*, *Société nationale d'édition et de diffusion* (SNED), *Entreprise nationale du livre* (ENAL), *Entreprise nationale des arts graphiques* (ENAG), Éditions

[31] In this project, I choose to refer to the visual-verbal medium in question using the term *bande dessinée* for several reasons. The works I examine appear in multiple formats including *histoires de bande dessinée*, *revue de bande dessinée*, and *albums de bande dessinée*. Notwithstanding the question of format, I avoid the term "graphic novel" and its French equivalent "roman graphique" which are used with differing frequency due, in part, to cultural perceptions and conversations among scholars and practitioners of the medium; "graphic novel" avoids the juvenile connotations of comics/cartoon that *bande dessinée* (literally "drawn strip") does not evoke. Furthermore, the works are known in Algerian sources as *bande dessinée*, and my usage respects this choice, although I employ "comics" as a synonym for *bande dessinée* occasionally to avoid repetition. In *bande dessinée* theory, *bande dessinée* (singular) and *bandes dessinées* (plural) designate the means of expression and the objective creation, respectively (Lacassin "Dictionary Definition" 39).

[32] The title *Retour d'Ahuristan* roughly translated to "Freaked-out-istan" in English; it is dedicated to Brahim Guerroui and Mohamed Dorbane and is composed of Slim's dessins de presse (Labter *Panorama* 218).

Dalimen, and Laabstore.[33] Creating and publishing in Algeria comes with its unique set of challenges and outcomes, as seen above in the history of the medium in Algeria.

Historical representation is also a requisite ingredient of the Algerian War Genre. Ameziane Ferhani writes of the medium's penchant for depicting Algerian history in *50 Ans de bande dessinée algérienne* that "La préoccupation d'exprimer par la bande dessinée l'histoire de l'Algérie, et notamment celle de son combat pour l'indépendance, a toujours été présente" (35). Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas situate Algerian *bande dessinée* in the context of Arab world in "The Algerian Strip and Bilingual Politics" (2009). On historical representation, Douglas and Malti-Douglas postulate that:

> The bloody war through which Algeria wrested its independence from a reluctant France plays an outsized role in the strips of that North African country. It receives more attention that any historical event in the strips of other Arab countries. […] The commemoration of the war and its heroes takes up much of the space occupied by the cult of personality in other Arab states. The war (and a limited number of other episodes conceptually tied to it) virtually monopolizes the vision of history transmitted by Algerian comic strips and largely replaces the evocation of Arab historical and cultural heroes that we find in the strips of other countries. (72)

It seems that the preoccupation with, and sheer quantity of, war representation is unique to Algerian *bande dessinée*. As established above by McKinney and Howell, the way that the war is

[33] SNED was a state-owned and state-run company that operated as the main editor for the state from the 1960s until 1983 when it was restructured and became ENAL; ENAL, as SNED's successor, remained state-owned and state-run (Labter *Panorama* 200). Other such editor/publishers include ENAP (*Entreprise nationale de presse*) and ENAG (*Entreprise nationale des arts graphiques*) who was responsible for the 2002/2003 re-editions (Labter *Panorama* 200).

represented is largely influenced in some texts by the state-controlled editors and publishers behind their creation.

Referencing the Algerian War of Independence is an obvious characteristic common to the genre and its texts. Ferhani suggests that "L'archétype de la bande dessinée sur la lutte de libération nationale est celui du récit sur les hauts faits d'armes, puisés ou inspirés de faits réels" (*50 Ans* 36). While many stories do include combat in their narratives, the representation of combat is not necessary for the purposes of the Algerian War Genre. Criteria such as wartime settings or representations of anti-colonial resistance fall under the parameters of the genre to include works like Algeria's first strip, *Naâr* (*Algérie Actualité* 1967), in which Mohamed Aram uses the superhero's fight against extraterrestrial invaders to express anti-colonial resistance. Also included are works showing how the war affected those who did not face combat directly, such as by Nechwa Djeghri's "L'attente d'une mère" from the collection *Waratha* (Éditions Dalimen 2012), that tells of a mother's mental anguish as she waits for her son to return home on 8 May 1945.

Wartime heroism is a convention of the Algerian War Genre. On how texts express heroism, Douglas and Malti-Douglas write the following:

> War and heroism are frequent topics in the strips of many Arab countries. In Algeria they take on a special color. Heroes are more singularized as individuals. They are also less frequently children, more often adults. This is partly due to the older audiences targeted by Algeria's comic strip artists, but partly also to the Algerian emphasis on the war of national liberation and the struggle against French colonialism. […] The Algerian hero is almost always a man, even when the strips are clearly aimed at a juvenile audience. ("The Algerian Strip" 73, 71)

This points to another commonality among works of this genre: the story's protagonist is often a singular, adult, male hero fighting for the Algerian cause. Collective heroism is, of course, told in stories of the genre. Take, for example, Ahmed Hebrih and Mahfoud Aïder's album *Échec aux leopards* (ENAL 1986, ENAG 2002), whose plot traces a series of coordinated events during the Battle of Algiers to present the collective effort of the Algerian people through the tasks of individual characters like Fatima, Saïd, and Omar. This album includes the rare female hero figure in its cast of heroes.

The individual hero is a convention of the Algerian War Genre. The hero is typically the protagonist of the story, and the plot often follows the hero on a journey or on a mission during which he endures pain and faces harsh conditions. One such story is Brahim Guerroui's story "Aube Brumeuse" from his album *Les enfants de la liberté* (ENAL 1986, ENAG 2002). "Aube Brumeuse" recounts one man's final days as a prisoner of war. The hero, Slimane, is on a journey from the prison where he narrowly escaped the firing squad with the *maquis* as his destination. His journey on foot is exasperated by the rain, as seen in Figure 4, which has penetrated his well-worn boots.[34] The rain exemplifies the generic convention of highlighting the harsh climactic conditions faced by the hero.

[34] The image in Figure 4 is a photograph I took of *Les enfants de la liberté* (ENAL 1986).

Figure 4: "Aube Brumeuse" by Brahim Guerroui shows the visual convention of depicting the elements that make the hero's mission more agonizing (*Les enfants de la liberté* 18-19).

Starting his journey in the afternoon, Slimane hopes to reach his parents' house before dawn as a stopover on his journey. His village has changed during his time away from home as a soldier, and someone helps him locate his parents' residence. Having already lost one son to the revolution, his mother is devastated when he tells her that he is only there for one night, saying "Je partirai au maquis!" (21.2). That night, he has a nightmare and decides to leave before his mother wakes. Resuming his mission, once the titular *aube brumeuse* has cleared, Slimane is spotted by French troops and shot in the chest. The final frame contains a caption informing the reader that Slimane's body was later taken back to his village to serve as an "avertissement!!" (24). In addition to showing the generic conventions of the lone hero and the harsh conditions of his journey/mission, "Aube Brumeuse" also shows the tendency of war stories to depict sacrifice.

The convention of sacrifice is not surprising considering the tremendous loss of life during the struggle for independence. But, as Douglas and Malti-Douglas have observed regarding sacrifice, "most distinctive in the Algerian war stories is their tendency to kill off the hero or leading protagonists" ("The Algerian Strip" 72). The hero often becomes a martyr who must die for the greater good, whether by completing a mission that he knows is a death wish or by sacrificing himself so that others may live. Douglas and Malti-Douglas stress that martyrdom and sacrifice is secular in these stories ("The Algerian Strip" 72).[35]

According to Labter, Algerian *bande dessinée* is the oldest, most advanced, and most well-known *bande dessinée* tradition in the Arab world and Africa, yet scholarship on it is scant or even incorrect (*Panorama* 14). Conceiving of the corpus of war stories from Algeria as a genre allows for a deeper understanding of these understudied texts. Furthermore, approaching the Algerian War Genre as a genre accounts for the commonalities among stories. Commonalities in wartime storytelling include shared themes of sacrifice, as Douglas and Malti-Douglas and Howell have noted.[36] Commonalities like the depiction of pro-FLN plots led McKinney and Howell to treat these texts as no more than propaganda. The corpus does include repetitive storytelling techniques, but this repetition plus difference works to create the genre, following Neale's theory of repetition and difference. Because genres are inherently temporal (Neale "Questions of Genre" 187), reading the historical character of texts of the Algerian War

[35] Jennifer Howell has also noted the representation of sacrifice in these stories, writing that "frequent are representations of individuals who must sacrifice themselves for the greater good. […] And in "Aube brumeuse" from Guerroui's *Les Enfants de la liberté*, a mother must put maternal sentiment aside, heed God's will, and sacrifice her son to the Algerian cause" ("Illustrating Independence" 24). I agree that "Aube Brumeuse" depicts familial sacrifice, but the mother did not willingly sacrifice her son since he snuck out while she slept.

[36] See Howell's "Illustrating Independence: The Algerian War Comic of the 1980s" (23-24) and Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas' "The Algerian Strip and Bilingual Politics" (71-73) for the commonalities in Algerian comics.

Genre attempts to account for the context of their creation and the cyclical nature of publishing in Algeria. Finally, following Barry Grant's notion that genre is a conceptual tool for understanding texts as art and artifact (*Film Genre Reader IV* xviii), this project aims to elevate *bande dessinée* on the war to the status of art that merits analysis as important postcolonial cultural productions.

Chapter Descriptions

Because this project establishes and examines the Algerian War Genre, each *bande dessinée* studied in the following chapters falls under the category of this genre. Each of the three chapters examine examples of the genre that deviate increasingly from the genre's initial definition. The flexible and mutable criterion of the Algerian War Genre is a strength of this study because it encourages diversity among texts in terms of format, decade of publication, and content. The framework of genre spans the project, while individual chapters engage with genre theory and comics theory to different extents. The chapters are organized by *bédéiste*—all of whom represent Algeria's first generation of *bédéistes*—in order to draw attention to their individual contributions to the medium and the genre as its pioneers.

In the project's first chapter, "Drawing War Stories: Tracing the war genre in the oeuvre of Mustapha Tenani", I investigate the repetitive storytelling and cyclic publishing of *bande dessinée* through the work of one *bédéiste* whose oeuvre spans the history of the medium in Algeria. Mustapha Tenani's career began in 1969 at the magazine *M'Quidèch* where he learned to draw as a teenager. The chapter demonstrates the role of *M'Quidèch* and its editor in the creation of war stories and styles, as well as the influence that the magazine had on Tenani's career. I then turn to Tenani's albums *De nos montagnes* (1981) and *Les hommes du djebel*

(1985), both of which are collections of *histoires de bande dessinée* that depict the Algerian War of Independence. Through a comparative reading of the stories from *De nos montagnes* and *Les hommes du djebel*, I show the artistic merit of Tenani's albums that, in turn, exemplify the Algerian War Genre. Following this *bédéiste*'s career as it continues well into the 21st century, during the revitalization of the medium through re-published texts and through the establishment of the FIBDA festival, this chapter demonstrates the interconnected mechanisms behind *bande dessinée* creation throughout the stages of the medium's development in order to show how the Algerian War Genre necessitates a study that spans the medium's history.

My second chapter, "Nuancing the Algerian War Genre: Drawing and Defining Difference in *Le village oublié* by Benattou Masmoudi", delves into one *album de bande dessinée* of the Algerian War Genre. The album *Le village oublié* (1983) contains but one war story, as opposed to the albums in the first chapter that are collections of war stories. The format of the one-shot album allows for this chapter to explore the complexity of the story that tells of how the war affected one Algerian village and its inhabitants. The album presents a variety of characters—notably including female characters—who populate the village during the war, and I examine these characters and their subject positions to argue that this album deviates from the genre's tendency to depict a monolithic Algerian population who shared political views during the war. Masmoudi's album features a complex narrative structure, which I examine in this chapter via comics narratology to demonstrate the work's insistence on memory and witnessing that threatens the version of the war that the single party wished to convey.

In the third and final chapter, "Displacing the Algerian War Genre: *Histoire de l'Algérie* and *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* by Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir", I show how the parameters of the genre continue to expand. This chapter investigates two *albums de bande dessinée* that treat the

Algerian War of Independence from disparate approaches. *Histoire de l'Algérie* (1986) is an epic historiography of Algeria's past. I examine the album's depiction of Algerians' encounters with other civilizations from the time before Antiquity until the 19th-century French invasion to depict the nation's history as a long history of resistance. This spirit of resistance predates Algeria as a nation and inscribes the struggle for independence onto the nation's past. *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* (2011) provides a focused account of the peaceful protest turned police repression in the French capital whose events have become synonymous with the date itself. I investigate how the album narrativizes historical events by intertwining the stories of fictional characters with the true accounts of people who lost their lives that night. Set against the backdrop of iconic Parisian landmarks, this story places Algerian history in the heart of the metropole and shifts the battlefield of the war from French Algeria to France itself. When read together, Abbas-Kebir's albums challenge the notion that the representations of Algerian War of Independence can be contained temporally or geographically.

This project conceives of the Algerian War Genre in order to show the prominence of historical representation in the medium from its inception immediately following independence until present day. By reading these *bande dessinée* together as a genre, this project demonstrates the lasting effects of the War of Independence on the medium and, in turn, on its readership as the nation continues to assert itself politically by way of the war and its memory.

CHAPTER ONE

Drawing War Stories:
Tracing the war genre in the oeuvre of Mustapha Tenani

1954! C'est le début de la lutte armée. Une lutte représentant pour le peuple algérien sept années et demi de souffrances, de sacrifices et d'héroïsme.
—Prologue, *De nos montagnes* and *Les hommes du djebel*

This text announces the Algerian War of Independence as the subject of the albums for which it serves as a prologue. Two of Algerian *bédéiste* Mustapha Tenani's *albums de bande dessinée* open with this prologue; its wartime themes of struggle, sacrifice, and heroism run throughout the albums as well as the *histoires de bande dessinée* that appear within their pages. These themes not only unite the eight stories told across the albums *De nos montagnes* (1981) and *Les hommes du djebel* (1985), they represent conventions of the Algerian War Genre that characterize Mustapha Tetani's oeuvre within the genre.

This frontmatter references another element of the Algerian War Genre, the role of the *Front de libération national*, which appears explicitly in the prologue (reproduced in its entirety) as follows:

> 1954! C'est le début de la lutte armée. Une lutte représentant pour le peuple algérien sept années et demi de souffrances, de sacrifices et d'héroïsme. La lutte fut déclenchée par tout un peuple et répandue à travers tout le territoire national. Un parti révolutionnaire, le Front de libération national jaillit. Il est appelé à regrouper tous les patriotes militants et à fixer les objectifs de la lutte libératrice. Les forces colonialistes se déchaînèrent, lançant de grandes opérations de mort et de destruction dans toutes les zones d'Algérie. Les moudjahidine entrèrent en action en lançant des offensives localisées ou généralisées. La

guerre de libération commence!… (n.p. *De nos montagnes*, *Les hommes du djebel*)[37]

Here, the *Front de libération national* (FLN) is positioned as the unifying force that organizes the struggle and mobilizes Algerian troops. Although this text acknowledges the toll of the war on the nation as a whole through collective terms like "le peuple algérien" and "tout un peuple", as well as through descriptions of the combat that took place "à travers tout le territoire national" and "dans toutes les zones d'Algérie", it is "les patriotes militants" and "les moudjahidine" who appear as characters in the albums (n.p.).

In the stories in these albums, the FLN figures into the narratives recounted in comics form. However, this "parti révolutionnaire*"* also has a hand in the creation of these stories since the FLN controlled the national publishing houses responsible for the albums in question. In both albums, the prologue shares a page with the imprint, thereby presenting the prologue's depiction of the FLN alongside the names of state-sanctioned publishing houses—*Société nationale d'édition et de diffusion* (SNED) for *De nos montagnes* (1981) and *Entreprise nationale du livre* (ENAL) for *Les hommes du djebel* (1985).[38]

Finally, the prologue is not signed, which leaves ambiguity as to the author of this

[37] In *Les hommes du djebel* (1985), there are two slight changes to the prologue from its previous appearance in *De nos montagnes* (1981). An accent (circumflex) is added to the word déchaînèrent. A third period is added at the end of the prologue to create an ellipsis as the final punctuation mark; the sentence "La guerre de libération commence!…" previously was punctuated as "!.." in 1981.

[38] In *De nos montagnes*, the imprint reads "SNED – ALGER – 1981" on one line, centered; in *Les hommes du djebel*, the imprint reads "© Entreprise nationale du livre" on one line, with "Alger, 1985" on the following line, centered. Keep in mind that SNED was a state-owned and state-run company that operated as the main editor for the state from the 1960s until 1983 when it was restructured and became ENAL, which remained state-owned and state-run (Lazhari Labter *Panorama de la bande dessinée algérienne* 200).

frontmatter—an editor, Tenani, or some combination thereof.[39] That the prologue appears in both albums, published four years apart by different entities, raises the question of repetition that defines *bande dessinée* creation and publication in independent Algeria. The repetitive and cyclical nature of the Algerian comics publishing industry, as outlined in the dissertation introduction, extends to *De nos montagnes* and *Les hommes du djebel*. Both albums contain stories that previously appeared in another publication, and one of the albums was among those chosen for 21st-century re-publication. The albums' prologue therefore introduces themes and conventions of the genre in addition to raising issues of publication that characterize the oeuvre of Mustapha Tenani.

Mustapha Tenani (1953-) is a pioneer of Algerian comics whose career begins with the medium's debut in Algeria and reflects the major periods of Algerian comics production from the late 1960s until the early 21st century (see Introduction for the history of the medium). As a teenager, he became part of the team at *M'Quidèch*, the comics magazine that defined the early period of comics in Algeria. For Tenani, the magazine provided an education in the Ninth Art in the absence of a BD-specific school and gave him a vocation.[40] Following the trend of the 1980s to create albums rather than magazines, much of Tenani's work from *M'Quidèch* appeared in this form, as did new stories from other *bédéistes*. His albums *De nos montagnes* (SNED 1981) and *Les hommes du djebel* (ENAL 1985) tell of the struggle for independence, and his album *Le fusil chargé* (ENAL 1986) depicts the resistance against French colonization during the 19th

[39] This text seems to be unique to Tenani's albums. In my research, I have not encountered this text in other albums, which indicates that it is not standard front matter for SNED or ENAL books like the *avertissement* in the 2002/2003 re-publications.

[40] See the biography of Tenani written by Abdelhakim Meziani in Tenani's album *Le fusil chargé* (6).

century. When albums were replaced with caricatures and political cartoons during the Dark Decade, Tenani founded and regularly contributed to the successful satirical periodical *El-Manchar* (or, *La Scie* in French) which circulated from 1990 to 2000.[41] As part of the effort to revitalize the Algerian *bande dessinée* in the early 21st century, the state publisher ENAG produced re-editions of *bande dessinée*, including new hardback editions of Tenani's albums *Les hommes du djebel* (ENAG 2002) and *Le fusil chargé* (ENAG 2002) as well as an album comprised of select issues of *M'Quidèch* (ENAG 2003) that feature Tenani's stories.

This chapter is a case study of the work of one cartoonist whose comics exemplify and arguably define the Algerian War Genre. The war as subject matter is obvious one element of *bande dessinée* of the Algerian War Genre, as established in the Dissertation Introduction, as are the themes, plot structures, and patterns that comprise the conventions of the genre. This chapter examines the generic repertoire in the work of one cartoonist in order to define and delineate the genre. It questions the repetitive and cyclical nature of Mustapha Tenani's oeuvre (which is characteristic of Algerian comics at large) both in terms of how stories are told and how these stories are published in the context of the genre.

Furthermore, the oeuvre of Mustapha Tenani has received significant attention as compared to its counterparts—if the term significant is even applicable to the understudied and

[41] Due to the format and genre, the political cartoons of *El-Manchar* (*La Scie*) are beyond the scope of this project. See Labter for an examination of this successful periodical that lasted a decade and marks an important period in Mustapha Tenani's career as it evolved with Algeria's changing political climate (*Panorama* 189-194). According to Ferhani, the cover of the first issue of *El-Manchar* was based on "Le radeau de la méduse" with art by Haroun and the idea by Aïder (*50 Ans de la bande dessinée algérienne* 136). Tenani was well-positioned to create this periodical considering that he lent his talents to notable Algerian comics magazines over the years: as a regular contributor to *M'Quidèch* from 1968 to 1973; as an editor and artist for the Arabic reboot of *M'Quidèch* in 1978; and as a contributor to various short-lived periodicals such as *Tarik* (1979), *Album de bandes dessinées algériennes* (1984), *Fantasia* (1986), *Boa* (1988), and the biweekly satiric publication *Baroud* (1992).

undervalued corpus of Algerian comics—in scholarship by Mark McKinney, Jennifer Howell, and Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas, all of whom touch upon Tenani's comics within their studies of the corpus that his work typifies.[42] While I incorporate and build upon their observations on comics by Tenani, my research questions for this chapter are motivated by the critical indifference (see Dissertation Introduction) with which scholars have treated Tenani's work. McKinney and Howell, for example, establish the role of these comics in disseminating FLN ideology during the 1980s but seem to write them off as pure propaganda.[43] Howell and Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas have identified commonalities among the stories told in Algerian comics, citing the theme of sacrifice in Tenani's comics as one such commonality.[44] Howell has even concluded that Tenani's stories have unoriginal storylines because of such

[42] Mark McKinney's "The Frontier and the Affrontier: French-Language Algerian Comics and Cartoons Confront the Nation" includes Tenani's war albums in a list of comics that reflect FLN ideology (189), while his *Redrawing French Empire in Comics* lists them as albums he referenced when studying their French counterparts (151, 239). Jennifer Howell's "Illustrating Independence: The Algerian War Comic of the 1980s" looks at the sacrifices made by Tenani's characters (23-24); her dissertation "Popularizing historical taboos, transmitting postmemory: the French-Algerian War in the bande dessinée" includes observations about several stories from Tenani's war albums on sacrifice and on the photographs that Tenani inserts into his illustrations; her monograph *The Algerian War in French-Language Comics: Postcolonial Memory, History, and Subjectivity* mentions her previous research on this corpus in a footnote but does not name Tenani or the albums (xxxvi, n12). Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas place Tenani's war albums in the larger context of Algerian comics and comics from the Arab world to show the specificities of Algerian comics in "The Algerian Strip and Bilingual Politics" (72-73).

[43] Neither McKinney nor Howell use the term propaganda but characterize the stories as such. See Mark McKinney "The Frontier and the Affrontier: French-Language Algerian Comics and Cartoons Confront the Nation" (189) and Jennifer Howell "Illustrating Independence: The Algerian War Comic of the 1980s" (23-24) for a discussion of Algerian comics and the Algerian State.

[44] See Howell's "Illustrating Independence: The Algerian War Comic of the 1980s" (23-24) and Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas' "The Algerian Strip and Bilingual Politics" (71-73) for the commonalities in Algerian comics.

commonalities.[45] This chapter investigates common elements in the depiction of the war, with a particular focus on the effect of similar or even repetitive storytelling in the context of the cyclical comics publishing industry.

In what follows, I approach the *bande dessinée* of Mustapha Tenani not as propaganda but as cultural productions with artistic merit, using comics analysis and genre theory to show their role in creating and maintaining the Algerian War Genre. The chapter begins with an examination of the magazine *M'Quidèch* to show its role in propagating a certain image of the war and its lasting influence on its young cartoonists as well as on the medium in Algeria. I then turn to Tenani's war stories that appear in his albums *De nos montagnes* and *Les hommes du djebel* to identify the generic conventions found within these eight stories. Finally, I examine Tenani's story "Les Chiens," which appeared in *M'Quidèch* and later in *Les hommes du djebel,* to tease out the significance of the two versions of this war story that crosses formats and spans decades.[46]

***M'Quidèch*: The State on art and art on the State**

Comics production in Algeria begins in the late 1960s soon after independence, and it is not surprising that the recent struggle for independence is featured in the nation's first *bande*

[45] Howell categorizes Tenani's albums as having unoriginal storylines that do not merit a plot summary in "Popularizing historical taboos, transmitting postmemory: the French-Algerian War in the bande dessinée" (34-35); she notes the lack of diversity in *The Algerian War in French-Language Comics: Postcolonial Memory, History, and Subjectivity* (xxxvi, n12).

[46] The primary texts in this chapter have not been translated into English, but their titles' English equivalents are: *M'Quidèch* [*M'Quidèch*], *De nos montagnes* [*From Our Mountains*], *Les hommes du djebel* [*The Mountain Men*], and "Les Chiens" ["The Dogs"] (my translations).

dessinée strip, first *album de bande dessinée*, and first *journal de bande dessinée*.[47] *M'Quidèch*, Algeria's first *journal de bande dessinée*, represents an important stage in the history of Algerian comics production and publication. The periodical was short-lived but significant, especially in terms of proliferation, influence, and state-sanctioned content that lasted well beyond its thirty-three issues and five-year run (1969-1974).[48] Lazhari Labter's *Panorama de la bande dessinée algérienne 1969-2009* is an invaluable resource on the history of this publication.

The first issue of *M'Quidèch* appeared in February of 1969 bearing the subtitle *Le journal illustré algérien*.[49] The debut issue addresses its readership with the following letter:

> Amis lecteurs,
>
> Une équipe de jeunes algériens a tenu à créer pour vous un journal illustré d'inspiration spécifiquement algérienne.
>
> Elle vous le présente et espère que les personnages vous plairont et vous amuseront.
>
> Elle espère aussi que vous ne manquerez pas de lui faire des suggestions, et que vous lui prodiguerez vos conseils, pour que, répondant à votre désir, elle puisse améliorer votre

[47] The first *bande dessinée* strip—*Naâr, une sirène à Sidi Ferruch* by Mohamed Aram—features a superhero who battles extraterrestrial invaders and offers a science fiction take on anticolonial resistance (Labter *Panorama* 52). The first Algerian *album de bande dessinée—Moustache et les Belgacem* by Slim—is set in the casbah during the Battle of Algiers. The first *journal de bande dessinée—M'Quidèch*—features the war frequently in its stories.

[48] Each issue after the first would have 40,000 copies (20,000 in Arabic, 20,000 in French), and in 1978, an Arabic-only version of the journal was briefly reborn (Labter *Panorama* 86-87).

[49] I use *M'Quidèch* to refer to the magazine as a whole to shorten and clarify the title which appears with some variation and usually with *M'Quidèch* stylized in all capital letters as *M'QUIDÈCH*. Another variation in the magazine's title is its subtitle, which seems to have changed over time, as seen in the following examples: Issue 1 (1969) listed the title and subtitle as *M'QUIDÈCH: Le journal illustré algérien*, Issue 23 (1972) simply listed *Le Journal de M'QUIDÈCH* (n23 1972), and Issue 25 (1972) carried the extended title and subtitle of *Le Journal de M'QUIDÈCH: La 1ere Bande Dessinée Algérienne*.

journal.

Écrivez-lui.

M'Quidèch

Société Nationale d'Édition et de Diffusion

3, Boulevard Zirout Youcef

Alger

This opening letter establishes *M'Quidèch: Le journal illustré algérien* as an undeniably Algerian magazine made by young Algerians for young Algerians.[50] The friendly greeting, multiple possessive pronouns, and the solicitation of suggestions by mail encourage the reader to take ownership and pride in this new Algerian magazine.[51]

The eponymous M'Quidèch, a young *campagnard*, is based on a character from *contes populaires* whose name is sometimes spelled M'Qidech (Labter *Panorama* 130). The character M'Quidèch is drawn by numerous artists throughout the magazine's run and displays heroism often seen in the magazine's stories. In the first issue, the story "M'Quidèch et l'ogre" inaugurates the new magazine and illustrates the fictional character's heroism as he fights a fearsome adversary to save others. This story appears opposite the letter to the reader, thereby linking the hero (on the right-hand side of the spread) with Algerian values and pride (on the

[50] I am citing the first issue as republished in 2003 by ENAG as *Le journal de M'Quidèch*. The 2003 re-edition contains three full issues and is not paginated.

[51] The terms *magazine*, *journal*, and *revue* are used interchangeably to refer to the periodical and comics magazine *M'Quidèch.*

left).[52] Images of the *campagnard* twice appear on the cover of the first issue of the magazine (in the cover art illustration depicting his standoff with the ogre, as well as at the top of this page where he gestures to the magazine's title) and twice on the page with the letter (in an image of him smelling a flower at the top of the page, then again with this character pointing to the address near the bottom of the page). M'Quidèch therefore occupies a position as a character in the story "M'Quidèch et l'ogre", as the magazine's namesake, and as a paratextual projection of the publication's creation and production.

The "inspiration spécifiquement algérienne" driving *M'Quidèch: Le journal illustré algérien* was indeed quite specific: the state controlled *Société nationale d'édition et de diffusion* (SNED) could use this national publication to disseminate official discourses and historical accounts through a popular medium. Another aim of *M'Quidèch* was to counteract the perceived negative effects of foreign comics; foreign *bande dessinée* publications, especially those from Europe, were banned during the Ben Bella presidency (1962-1965) and then disappeared from the market after the 1965 coup by Boumédienne (Labter *Panorama* 80-82). The national publication enforced strict guidelines on its young cartoonists for creating Algerian heroes, Algerian settings, Algerian content, and Algerian aesthetics (Labter *Panorama* 81). Permanent *rubriques* on Algerian topics like *civisme*, *connaissance d'Algérie*, and *arabisation* were implemented by the second issue of the magazine (Labter *Panorama* 83).

The guidelines imposed on the *bédéistes* leads to the question of authorship. While the concept of authorship is questioned and reworked in literary theory, the question is particularly

[52] See "M'Quidèch et l'ogre" (n.p.) by Ahmed Haroun (art) and Abderrahmane Madoui [as A.M.] (script) in *Le Journal de M'Quidèch* (ENAG Éditions, 2003). In addition to writing this script, Abderrahmane Madoui served as "directeur du département Édition de la Sned et initiateur du projet" (Labter *Panorama* 77). Abderrahmane Madoui was described by Boukhalfa Amazit as an "ancient militant du *Parti du peuple algérien* (PPA)" (Labter *Panorama* 87).

vexing for the visual-verbal medium of comics due to their multiple creators (Dittmer 4). Authorship could refer to the writer/author (*scénariste*) and/or to the artist (*dessinateur*). *M'Quidèch* brought together experienced writers and young artists to create SNED-approved content. Authors (*scénaristes*) like cinematographer Lamine Merbah and journalist Boukhalfa Amazit collaborated with artists (*dessinateurs*) like Mustapha Tenani for whom the magazine served as an art school, complete with drawing lessons. Part of the aforementioned "équipe de jeunes algériens" behind the magazine, Mustapha Tenani turned sixteen years old the summer the magazine debuted.

Journalist turned *scénariste* Boukhalfa Amazit discussed his time at the magazine (1970-1973, or Issues 14-32) in a 2009 interview with Labter in which he reflected upon how comics were created under the constraints of SNED's guidelines and political agenda. Boukhalfa Amazit explained how political ideology influenced his role as *scénariste*, stating that:

> Pour les journalistes que nous étions, nous avons contribué à installer les préoccupations du journal dans l'actualité et le vécu socioculturel ou historique des Algériens, particulièrement de l'enfant and de l'adolescent auxquels s'adressait *M'Quidèch*. Tout cela, bien entendu, dans les frontières idéologiques imposes à l'époque par le parti unique. (…) Comme tous les médias de l'époque du parti unique, *M'Quidèch* avait lui aussi un champ balisé de lignes au-delà desquelles il ne fallait pas s'aventurer. Les thèmes qui ne souffraient pas de l'autorité de la statue du Commandeur, étaient généralement ceux liés à l'histoire d'une façon générale ou aux aspects liés à l'éveil de l'enfance. (*Panorama* 89, 90-91)

According to Boukhalfa Amazit, the political agenda at *M'Quidèch* was not unique to this publication, thus suggesting the normalization of censorship and the extensive control of creative

content at the time of the magazine's run. On the collaborative author-artist teams working within these guidelines to create *bande dessinée* on acceptable topics, Boukhalfa Amazit explained that "nous nous retrouvions, le dessinateur et moi, à imaginer une histoire, à la découper, à la dialoguer et à l'exécuter. Dans ce domaine, comme dans beaucoup d'autres, il eut été utile de s'ouvrir et d'ouvrir grandes les portes de la créativité" (Labter *Panorama* 86). Overall, in the interview, Amazit speaks fondly of his time at the magazine, citing the creativity, teamwork, and love of drawing that kept everyone at *M'Quidèch* despite the poor pay, bureaucratic mishaps, and the controlled framework imposed by the *parti unique* within which they worked (Labter *Panorama* 88-90).

Mustapha Tenani's contributions to *M'Quidèch* reflect the magazine's penchant for collaboration, serialized storytelling, *rubriques*, and recurring characters. During his time at the magazine (1969-1973), Tenani authored or drew at least 17 different items, and his artwork graced the cover of at least five issues of *M'Quidèch* (see Figure 5). His cover art reflects two aspects of his work at the magazine—creating the recurring character Grand Babah and contributing his artistic talents to the "De nos montagnes" *rubrique*. Three issues of *M'Quidèch* have Tenani's Grand Babah character on their covers (see Figure 5, left) to advertise the presence of this recurring character in the stories "Une aventure de Grand Babah: Les pillards" (Issue 4, 1969), "Grand Babah: La défaite des pillards" (Issue 9, 1969), and "Les nouvelles aventures de Grand Babah" (Issue 19, 1971).[53] The other two issues (see Figure 5, right) showcase Tenani's artwork and announce their corresponding stories from the "De nos

[53] According to Labter, Kapitia wrote the script for "Une aventure de Grand Babah: Les pillards" (Issue 4, 1969), and Lamine Merbah wrote the script for "Les nouvelles aventures de Grand Babah" (Issue 19, 1971) (*Panorama* 177).

montagnes" *rubrique*: "Les Chiens" (Issue 25, 1972) and "Le Rescapé" (Issue 28, 1973).[54] Looking at these covers as a collection (see Figure 5) accentuates the marked differences in Tenani's stylistic approaches to depicting Grand Babah, which takes inspiration from the Belgian comics series *Les Schtroumpfs* (*The Smurfs*), as opposed to illustrating the more serious content of his wartime stories from the "De nos montagnes" *rubrique*.[55]

[54] Boukhalfa Amazit wrote the script for both stories (Labter *Panorama* 177).

[55] The information I have regarding the cover art, list of stories in issues, and other story-specific information is thanks to Labter's work and reproduction of the magazine's covers (*Panorama* 139).

Figure 5: Tenani's art appears on the cover of five issues of *M'Quidèch* (Labter, *Panorama de la bande dessinée algérienne* 143-168).[56]

The *rubrique* "De nos montagnes" was dedicated to creating stories about the *haut-faits d'armes* during the Algerian War.[57] According to Ferhani, the title of this rubrique is "en référence directe aux maquis de l'Armée de libération nationale" (*50 Ans* 35). Between 1970 and 1973, the *rubrique* produced around fifteen stories, at least five of which were the work of

[56] The images in Figure 5 are photographs I took of Labter's *Panorama de la bande dessinée algérienne* (2009).

[57] The *rubrique* was started by Ahmed Hebrih and Mohamed Bouslah (Ferhani *50 Ans* 36).

Tenani (Labter *Panorama* 174-177).[58] Tenani illustrated stories in the *rubrique* titled "Les Chiens" (Issue 25, 1972), "La chanson d'Aghadhir" (Issue 26, 1973), "Le Condamné" (Issue 27, 1973), "Le Rescapé" (Issue 28, 1973), and "Le Bunker" (Issue 29, 1973).[59] These stories—with the exception of "Le Bunker"—were collaborations between Tenani and *scénariste* Boukhalfa Amazit. Considering this *rubrique*'s subject matter in the context of the political ideology that controlled the creation of *bande dessinée* through the authors who wrote the storylines, as well as the artists who learned to draw on the job, it seems that *M'Quidèch* plays a unique role in the development of the Algerian War genre.

Two albums, eight stories, one genre

Looking at the "De nos montagnes" *rubrique* and Tenani's contributions to it functions as a *point de départ* for demonstrating the legacy of *M'Quidèch* on Algerian comics production for decades following its demise in 1974. Content from the "De nos montagnes" *rubrique* made the jump from the magazine to stand-alone albums, following the album trend of the late 1970s and 1980s. Mustapha Tenani's first album—*De nos montagnes* (SNED 1981)—shares the name of

[58] Labter lists stories by artist in *Panorama*, attributing five "De nos montagnes" *rubrique* stories to Tenani (177), two to Mohamed Bouslah (Mémèd) (174), and seven to Ahmed Hebrih (175). Labter credits Mohamed Bouslah with "Le moussebel de la côte 412" (Issue 9, 1970) and "La tour de guet" (Issue 10, 1970) (*Panorama* 174) and Ahmed Hebrih with "Le châtiment du traître" (Issue 8, 1970), "Djurdjura l'écoute" (Issue 11, 1970), "Le prisonnier" (Issue 12, 1970) with script by Lamine Merbah, "Le pont" (Issue 13, 1970) with script by Lamine Merbah. "Les documents secrets" (Issue 15, 1971) with script by Lamine Merbah, "Commando spécial" (Issue 20, 1972) with script by Boukhalfa Amazit, and "Le chemin de l'espoir" (Issue 21, 1972) with script by Boukhalfa Amazit (*Panorama* 175).

[59] See *Panorama de la bande dessinée algérienne* for a list of all of Tenani's contributions to the magazine (177) and for a list of titles in the "De nos montagnes" *rubrique* (174-175). Art from "Le Condamné" does not appear on the cover of Issue 27, but the *rubrique* itself is named in the cover art in the form of a *bulle* spoken by a character who lists the contents of the issue (see this cover in *Panorama* 167).

the “De nos montagnes” *rubrique*. Furthermore, his album *Les hommes du djebel* (ENAL 1985) contains updated versions of “Les Chiens” and “Le Rescapé”, stories from the “De nos montagnes” *rubrique* stories that previously graced the cover of issues of *M’Quidèch* (see Figure 5). Consequently, much of the magazine’s content—as well as its ideology—survived the shift to albums.

Furthermore, censorship of media continued well into the 1980s, affecting the publication of albums like Tenani’s. *De nos montagnes* was published in 1981 by SNED, the same publisher as *M’Quidèch*, and *Les hommes du djebel* was published in 1985 by ENAL, the predecessor of SNED. As established in the Dissertation Introduction, albums of the 1980s were published by state-controlled publishing houses that were tasked with disseminating an official historical account of the war—one that emphasized the FLN’s leadership during the revolution in order to legitimize the FLN’s single-party rule. In a 1987 interview with Labter, “bédéiste, ancien officier de l’ALN, député à l’indépendance, premier ambassadeur d’Algérie à Cuba” Amine Zirout described *bande dessinée* publishing during this period, saying that: “Ce n’est pas le système politique que je critique, non, mais cette ‘chose’ anonyme qui pèse tellement sur nous, et qui fait que l’on soit obligé de s’autocensurer” (*Panorama* 115, 117). If this cartoonist, whose politics seem to align with those of the ruling party, would self-censure, then one can only wonder how cartoonists without this affiliation fared. This self-censoring adds a layer of oversight to the content originating under the strict control of SNED and ENAL.

Outliving the magazine from which they originated, the *bande dessinée* stories in Tenani’s albums *De nos montagnes* (SNED 1981) and *Les hommes du djebel* (ENAL 1985) all

engage with the representation of the Algerian War of Independence.[60] It should be noted that neither album mentions the influence of *M'Quidèch* or the collaboration between author and artist at the magazine (see the section below on "Les Chiens" for more on the stories born of the Tenani-Boukhalfa collaboration). Although both albums are credited entirely to Tenani, they contain more than his war stories. *De nos montagnes* features *bande dessinée*, poems with illustrations by Tenani, and non-fiction *récits* about war heroes;[61] *Les hommes du djebel* features *bande dessinée* as well as poems with illustrations by Tenani.[62] The poems are from another

[60] Labter categorizes the comics of *De nos montagnes* (1981) as "Cinq récits sur le thème de la lutte de libération algérienne (repris de la revue *M'Quidèch*)" (*Panorama* 209) and the comics of *Les hommes du djebel* (1985) as "Trois récits sur la lutte de libération algérienne (repris de la revue *M'Quidèch*)" (*Panorama* 215). Tenani's Grand Babah character also outlived the magazine and appeared in an album published in 1983 titled *Les aventures de Grand Babah* (Labter *Panorama* 251).

[61] *De nos montagnes* (SNED 1981) features cover art by Tenani and contains the following texts (listed in page order): a preface titled "1954! La guerre de libération commence!..." (also in *Les hommes du djebel)*; the non-fiction text "Récit: Mohamed Larbi Ben M'Hidi" (1-4); the poem "Le Malheur" (5) by Malek Haddad; the comic "La Gourde" (6-15) by Tenani (script, art); the poem "Hurlements" (16) by Rachid Boudjedra; the comic "La dernière carte!" (17-20) by Tenani (script, art); the poem "À propos d'un homme" (21) by Mahmoud Darwish [credited as Mahmoud Daruiche]; the comic "Le Combattant" (22-25) by Tenani (script, art) featuring the work of Mohamed Al-Akdar Assâyhi, Rachid Ikene, and Mohamed Dib; the non-fiction text "Récit: Amirouche Badji Mokhtar" (26-30); the comic "Le Survivant" (31-39) by Tenani (script, art) who credits Amouri with the idea; the comic "L'Éclaireur" (40-45) by Tenani (script, art); the non-fiction text "Récit: Abderahmane Taleb" (46-48); and cover art (back) by Tenani with excerpts from "Fragments d'une épopée" from *Roman d'un révolutionnaire* by Mohamed Al-Akdar Assâyhi. The poems are from the collection *Douleurs Rythmées* (SNED 1974), edited by A. Lahbabi; each features an illustration by Tenani. The photographs and documentation from the récits are attributed to the "Ministère de l'information et de la culture" (49).

[62] *Les hommes du djebel* (ENAL 1985) features cover art by Tenani and contains the following texts (listed in page order): a preface titled "1954! La guerre de libération commence!..." (which also appears in *De nos montagnes*); the comic "Les Chiens" (2-11) by Tenani (script, art); a poem titled "Pour et Contre" (12) by G. Touati with an illustration by Tenani; the comic "Le Rescapé" (13-23) by Tenani (script, art); a poem titled "Alger la rouge" (24) by Henri Kréa with a photograph of the city; and the comic "Le Terroriste" (25-32) by Tenani (script, art). The poems are from the collection *Douleurs Rythmées* (SNED 1974), edited by A. Lahbabi.

SNED publication—*Douleurs Rhythmées*—which adds another layer to these texts in terms of repetition and re-publication; similarly, the *récits* in *De nos montagnes* are attributed to the "Ministère de l'information et de la culture". An additional element inserted in the albums are photographs—in the *récits* in *De nos montagnes* and in the *bande dessinée* stories themselves in *Les hommes du djebel*.[63] While these other textual, artistic, and photographic elements contribute to the albums and affect how the reader consumes them, the comics themselves are the object of study at hand.

With a combined eight *bande dessinée* stories all on the subject of the war for independence, Tenani's albums *De nos montagnes* (1981) and *Les hommes du djebel* (1985) offer a corpus of Algerian War Genre stories by one cartoonist. These stories lend themselves to an examination into the conventions of the genre like the hero figure, the Algerian landscape, and the themes of heroism and sacrifice (see Dissertation Introduction). Because, as Stephen Neale posits, the repertoire of generic conventions always exceeds any single text and therefore cannot be exhausted by any single text (*Genre and Hollywood* 219), this corpus of eight of Algerian War Genre stories presents an opportunity to explore the repertoire of generic conventions available to and employed by Mustapha Tenani.

The titles of the stories themselves present a pattern in their naming conventions: the titles are "La Gourde", "La dernière carte!", "Le Combattant", "Le Survivant", and "L'Éclaireur" (*De nos montagnes*) and "Les Chiens", "Le Rescapé", and "Le Terroriste" (*Les hommes du*

[63] Photo comics date from the 1940s in Italy; these experimental comics were comprised entirely of photographs and had a global influence. See Howell's "Popularizing historical taboos, transmitting postmemory: the French-Algerian War in the bande dessinée" for an analysis of photographs in the albums of Mustapha Tenani (192-193).

djebel).[64] The majority of titles refer to the singular male hero who serves as the protagonist. The hero figure is a convention of the genre, as established in the Dissertation Introduction. The opening pages of these stories (see Figure 6) often focus on the hero, even when he is not the subject of the title: the hero of "La Gourde" appears on the opening page of this story whose title refers to a plot element, while the eponymous character from "Le Combattant" also graces the story's opening page.[65] The story titles point to the various roles of the hero figure (e.g. *combattant* or *éclaireur*) in these war stories whose plots tell of the hero on the run ("Les Chiens" and "Le Terroriste"), the hero as the sole survivor of his unit ("La Gourde", "Le Survivant", and "Le Rescapé"), or the lone hero on a mission ("Le Combattant" and "Le Rescapé").

[64] The story titles' English equivalents from *De nos montagnes* are "La Gourde" ["The Flask"], "La dernière carte!" ["The Last Card"], "Le Combattant" ["The Combatant"], "Le Survivant" ["The Lone Survivor"], and "L'Éclaireur" ["The Scout"] and from *De nos montagnes* are "Les Chiens" ["The Dogs"], "Le Rescapé" ["The Survivor"], and "Le Terroriste" ["The Terrorist"] (my translations).

[65] The images in Figure 6 are photographs I took of *De nos montagnes* (SNED 1981) and *Les hommes du djebel* (ENAL 1985); this is the case for all figures featuring images from these texts.

Figure 6: Tenani draws war comics in a variety of styles, as seen in the opening pages of "La Gourde", "La dernière carte!", "Le Combattant", "Le Survivant", and "L'Éclaireur" (*De nos montagnes* 6, 17, 22, 31, 40) and "Les Chiens", "Le Rescapé", and "Le Terroriste" (*Les hommes du djebel* 3, 14, 26).

The Algerian landscape plays an important role in Tenani's war stories that demonstrate the presence of fighting "à travers tout le territoire national" and "dans toutes les zones d'Algérie" (see the albums' prologue, n.p.). Showing the many treacherous terrains of Algeria and their climatic challenges is a visual convention of the war genre stories by Tenani. The opening pages of these stories (see Figure 6) show the harsh conditions of the desert ("La Gourde") and the mountains ("La dernière carte!" and "Les Chiens") as well as other climatic and environmental challenges like snow ("Le Combattant" and "Le Rescapé") and the dark of night ("Le Survivant" and "Les Chiens"). With the exception of "Le Terroriste" which is set in the city, the other stories depict harsh climatic conditions or inhospitable landscape that the protagonist must endure and that heighten the danger of the mission.

While most stories in these albums fall into the broad generic categories of having a singular hero or being set against a harsh Algerian landscape and climate, the *bande dessinée* stories in *De nos montagnes* (1981) and *Les hommes du djebel* (1985) deviate from the set expectations of the genre to present a variety of wartime situations that are drawn using many artistic styles (see Figure 6). These stories lend themselves to an examination into the repetition and difference through which they are inscribed into the Algerian War Genre. In what follows, I present these eight stories in the order they appear in the albums through synopses of the wartime events depicted and in terms of what distinguishes each story in this corpus in order to better delineate the genre.

The first *bande dessinée* story in the album *De nos montagnes* is "La Gourde" (6-15), in which an Algerian soldier and a French soldier face off not in the album's titular mountains but rather "dans la chaleur torride du désert" (6).[66] As generic convention, the inhospitable desert

[66] Tenani signed his art with the year 1978 (*De nos montagnes* 15).

environment is also key to the plot: both men are traveling through the desert alone, and both desperately need to reach the flask of water located between them (see Figure 7, right). After an armed struggle, the French soldier breaks away and runs toward the flask. He is struck down before reaching his destination, and the story ends with the Algerian soldier coming to retrieve his fallen flask, which suggests that the hero might survive the desert. What is distinctive about this war story is that the Algerian hero, a lone survivor, has a French counterpart. Furthermore, the story gives each soldier a flashback that recounts how they became lone survivors. This is the albums' only instance of a dual flashback.[67] That their flashbacks share a page (see Figure 7, left) reinforces the similar situations of the two men, while the unique use of black gutters in this story visually separates the men and their experiences. They are counterparts, not equals.

[67] Other stories with flashbacks include "Le Combattant", "Les Chiens", and "Le Terroriste".

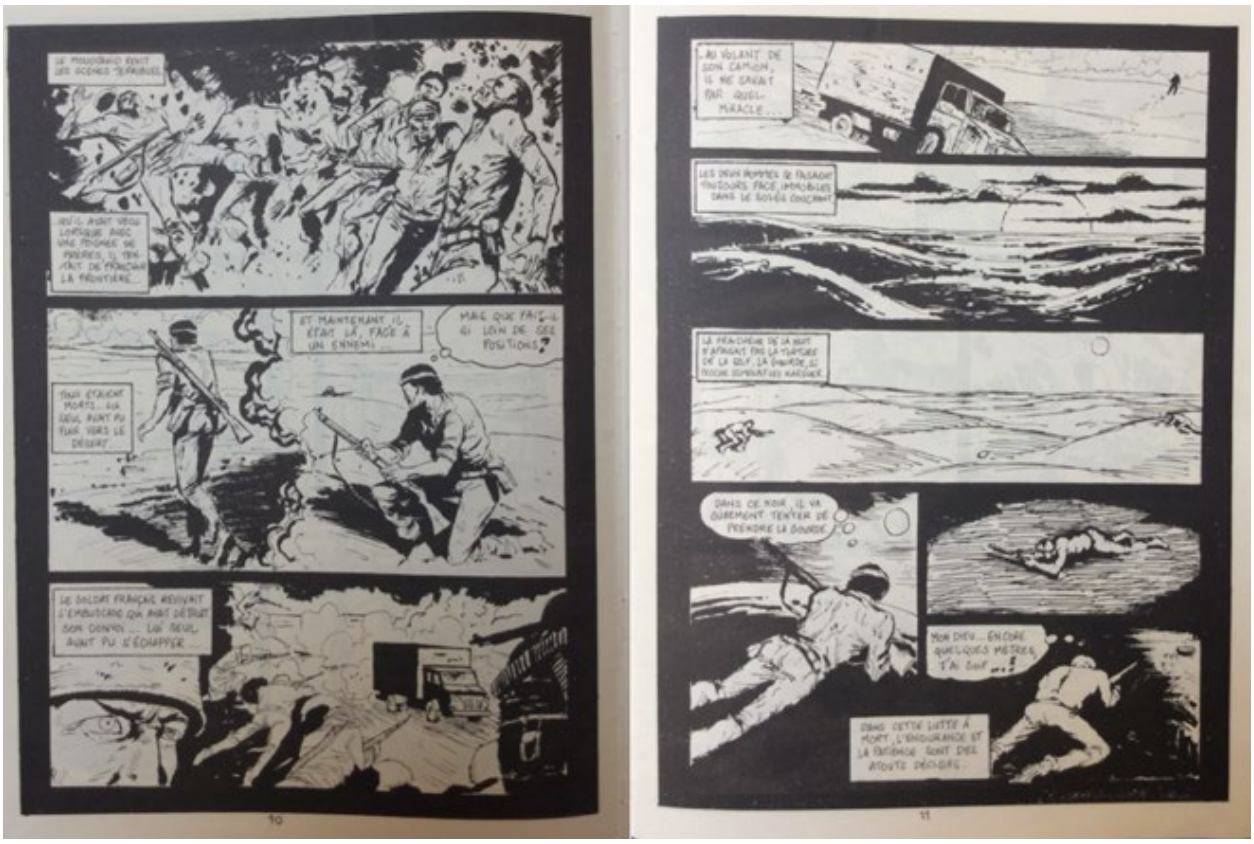

Figure 7: "La Gourde" features flashbacks by the Algerian hero and his French counterpart [left] who face off in the desert [right] (*De nos montagnes* 10-11).

In "La dernière carte!" (*De nos montagnes* 17-20), two military units find themselves at a standoff in the mountains, with the Algerians perched atop a rock formation with the French outnumbering and surrounding them. Breaking from the generic convention of the hero figure as protagonist, this is the album's only story featuring a collective effort. The French want to take the Algerians alive, but the Algerians know they will be tortured for "renseignements sur notre organisation" if taken alive (18). Using a bullhorn, the French *capitaine* addresses the Algerians saying "C'est bête de mourir, croyez-moi! Je vous promets la vie sauve… Jetez vos armes et avance!" (19). Although the French have sustained losses in this standoff, the Algerians have been on the rock for two days without water. The *capitaine* thinks the opposition has played their last card and comes out into the open. He is shot down as a caption announces that "Leur

dernière carte, c'est lutter!" (20). In this story, heroism is shown through the actions of an entire unit (rather than through the actions of a singular protagonist) who exemplify the ability to fight until death is imminent, despite being outnumbered and despite the hostile conditions of the mountain.

"Le Combattant" (*De nos montagnes* 22-25) follows a lone Algerian soldier as he trudges though the snowy mountains while contemplating his belated decision to join the fight for freedom. The reluctant hero figure differentiates this story from others in the genre. This character asks himself, "Ah! Pourquoi ai-je attendu, si longtemps, avant de rejoindre les combattants?" (22) and "Comment n'ai-je pas pensé que ma place était à la montagne, comme les aigles?" (23). His musings point to a visual distinction in this story: his thoughts are not contained within speech or thought balloons, rather they are typed—not lettered—and set off by *guillemets* against the snowy backdrop. The caption stating that "Maintenant, le voilà devenu *algérien*" (22, original emphasis) describes his belated decision and suggests that only those who fight are considered Algerian, thus revealing the monolithic vision of the war held by the FLN.[68]

"Le Survivant" (*De nos montagnes* 31-39) opens with one man's horrible realization that he is his unit's lone survivor following a landmine explosion amplified by their own TNT that was accidentally detonated by one of their own (32).[69] This story is rendered differently than other Tenani stories with heavy lines and crosshatching throughout and with the terror of the mass losses depicted like a horror comic. After declaring "Compagnons, votre sacrifice ne sera pas vain" he sets off alone to complete their mission and destroy the munitions depot (33). He

[68] These three quotations are all from the section of the story attributed to Mohamed Al Akhdar Assâyhi (1965); the story attributes other quotations in the text to Rachid Ikene and Mohamed Dib.

[69] Tenani (script, art) credits Amouri with the idea for this story (*De nos montagnes* 31). See also *Le survivant et autres nouvelles* by Mouloud Achour (SNED 1978).

travels on foot in the dark of night through woods and undergrowth, dodging French patrol troops along the way. Upon reaching his destination, he determines that he does not have time for his original plan (to rig the depot with explosives to detonate from a distance) and decides to open fire on the French and the depot, knowing this will destroy the depot but also end his life. He cries "Pour que vive l'Algérie!" (39) before pulling the trigger, thereby completing his unit's mission. Visually distinct due to the horror style, this story demonstrates the generic conventions of the lone survivor who completes the unit's mission alone, even if this is only achieved by sacrifices himself.

The final story in *De nos montagnes,* "L'Éclaireur" (40-45), follows a scout named Ali who is sent ahead of his unit and encounters trouble along the way (40). Ali comes across three figures dressed as Algerian soldiers only to realize they are French soldiers "déguisés en moudjahidines" (44) who then shoot the protagonist and leave him for dead. Gravely wounded and soaked with rain, Ali continues his mission thinking he is his unit's "seule chance" (44). The story ends with Ali dying from his gunshot wounds before reaching his unit, which, in turn, killed the three disguised soldiers without knowing they killed Ali, whose lifeless body appears in the last frame. The intense rain and the mountainous setting (knowing that Ali does not know the mountains well) bring attention to Ali's ability to summon the strength to continue after being shot in order to save others. Continuing despite the odds is a convention of the genre.

The first story in *Les hommes du djebel* is "Les Chiens" (2-11) in which the titular dogs pursue an Algerian hero. It plays on the tendency of these stories to use *chien* as a pejorative for the French by rendering actual dogs as part of the enemy troops. His journey is distinct in the genre in that the hero's destination is unknown (as he is running away from something rather than traveling toward a specific place) and his mission is to survive (rather than to perform a

discrete military task). “Les Chiens” is examined in depth below.

“Le Rescapé” (*Les hommes du djebel* 13-23) tells of a lone survivor who struggles to stay alive in the snowy mountains near djebel Chelia. Snow dominates the images in this story (see Figure 6 above) to visually replicate the overwhelming feelings of the hero whose thoughts are dominated by betrayal. The hero contemplates the betrayal of his men, thinking that “Je ne pense pas que les villageois nous aient dénoncés” then “Mais alors, qui leur a montré notre refuge, qui?” and “Qui a osé?” (16) as he trudges through the snow. The survivor, at the point of delirium, recognizes the farm of his childhood friend named Lounis. Despite his previous musings on betrayal, he immediately worries for Lounis’ safety when he sees a French jeep parked outside the home, not suspecting that Lounis is working with the French and gave away the protagonist’s unit. The old acquaintances begin to brawl, before the French soldiers shoot Lounis, then the protagonist. In a conversation that ends the story, one soldier says of the hero’s actions “Quel idiot ce ‘fellagha’” to which the other replies “Ouais… Je crois que tu ne connais pas encore ces hommes, ce qui les pousse à agir de cette façon… […] Et je pense que tu ne le sauras jamais. C’est leur secret… le secret des hommes du djebel” (23). This ending describes *les hommes du djebel* as both unknowable and unpredictable to their opposition. It serves to reinforce the position of the hero (an *homme du djebel*) as opposed to Lounis, a rare example in the genre of an Algerian character who betrays the cause.

“Le Terroriste” (13-23), the last *bande dessinée* in *Les hommes du djebel*, is a war story of a different style. Rendered as a *policier*, this story tells of a pair of FLN-affiliated men, Mourad and Mustapha. The dual protagonists also differentiate this story in which Mourad represents the eponymous *terroriste*. The story begins when police appear to arrest the pair and Mourad has a flashback that reveals what led up to this moment. Mourad was given a mission by

"Si Lakhdar, le responsible FLN d'une cellule d'Alger-centre" to assassinate commissioner Grofer for his torture of Algerians (27); Mustapha was Mourad's getaway driver. To avoid the police, the men sneak out the back, steal a car, and drive off, only to have their tires shot out causing the car to wreck. Mourad and Mustapha are arrested, interrogated by torture, and sentenced to death and life in prison, respectively. A caption critiques their trial as: "Un simulacre de procès, hâtivement mené, reconnut Mourad coupable de la mort de Grofer. La justice de cette nation 'civilisatrice' le condamna à mort pour 'actes de terrorisme'" (32). With its visual style similar to that of a *policier*, "Le Terroriste" provides an urban-set war story that explicitly names the FLN and critiques the hypocrisy of France's *mission civilisatrice* with its state-sanctioned torture in Algeria.[70]

In sum, this corpus of eight war stories displays markers of the genre like the singular hero; harsh conditions which heighten the danger of the mission; and wartime bravery, heroism, and sacrifice. Moreover, the corpus shows how the genre is created through instances of repetition and difference; for example, the repeated use of a singular hero as opposed to the exceptions of "La dernière carte!" with its group mission and "Le Terroriste" with its pair. In many stories, the hero dies ("Le Survivant", "L'Éclaireur", "Le Rescapé", and "Le Terroriste") or is left for dead ("La Gourde" and "Les Chiens"). "Le Combattant" ends when the hero is shot down by a French soldier, and the poem "Vivre aujourd'hui," attributed to Mohamed Dib, appears next to the lifeless hero: "Hommes / que rien ne tuera jamais, / hommes qui endurez tout,

[70] The text twice refers to France via the term *civilisatrice*, which appears in scare quotes in both instances to indicate sarcasm (27, 32).

/ ouvertes, / vos faces rayonnent, / un nouveau jour commence" (25).[71] This poem cum epitaph demonstrates that sacrifice in the name of the revolution is key to the genre. By exploring the themes, plot structures, and patterns of the genre in these stories, the corpus within Tenani's albums *De nos montagnes* (1981) and *Les hommes du djebel* (1985) emerges as a paradigm for understanding the range of the Algerian War Genre.

One story, two versions, four publications: "Les Chiens"

Let us turn to one story by Mustapha Tenani to trace the cyclical nature of Algerian comics publishing across decades and to ask how this affects the genre. The story "Les Chiens" first appeared in 1972 in the 25th issue of *Le Journal de M'Quidèch: La 1ère Bande Dessinée Algérienne* under the "De nos montagnes" *rubrique*.[72] An updated version of the story appeared in 1985 in the paperback album *Les hommes du djebel*, as examined above. Both the magazine version "Les Chiens" (*M'Quidèch* SNED 1972) and the album version "Les Chiens" (*Les hommes du djebel* ENAL 1985) were reprinted again in the 21st century, in the ENAG re-editions of *Le Journal de M'Quidèch* (2003) and *Les hommes du djebel* (2002). In other words, there are two versions (or iterations) of Mustapha Tenani's "Les Chiens" in four total publications.

[71] "L'Éclaireur" similarly ends with a poem as epitaph. The poem by Aboûlqâssim Achâbbi reads: "S'il arrive, un jour, au peuple de vouloir vivre, / Il sera nécessaire que le destin consente, / Il sera nécessaire que la nuit se dissipe, / Il sera nécessaire que les chaines se brisent" (45). The deaths of the people fighting for freedom are another necessity in the process.

[72] This issue (issue 25, 1972) bears the extended title *Le Journal de M'QUIDÈCH: La 1ere Bande Dessinée Algérienne*. The issue contains the following—all of which are from recurring series or *rubriques*: "Richa prend du poids" by Sid Ali Melouah (art) and Boukhalfa Amazit (script); "Les aventures de Sinbad" by J.F.M.; "De nos montagnes: Les chiens" by Mustapha Tenani (art) and Boukhalfa Amazit (script); "Kouider: Les forges de la liberté!" by Mahfoud Aïder (art) and Boukhalfa Amazit (script); "M'Barek: Facheux voisinage" by Slimane Saladin [as S. Zeghidour] (art) and Boukhalfa Amazit (script); and "Les gars de chez nous: Et pour un lopin de terre" by Maz (art) and Boukhalfa Amazit (script) (*Le Journal de M'Quidèch* 2003).

I propose a comparative close reading of "Les Chiens" (1972) and "Les Chiens" (1985), two iterations of the same Algerian War Genre story depicting one man's plight after he escapes imprisonment only to be tracked by dogs and chased down by his captors. As Hillary Chute theorizes the act of comics creation: "Drawing is not just mimetic: it is its own artifact, substance, thing, phenomenology" (*Disaster Drawn* 27). I argue that this extends to both versions of the story. Although "Les Chiens" (1972) was created under controlled authoritarian circumstances at *M'Quidèch* where Tenani also learned to draw, his *bande dessinée* work is complex and deserving of analysis as a postcolonial cultural production. Furthermore, "Les Chiens" (1985) is not merely a reprint of "Les Chiens" (1972), but rather a new edition with variations and changes different enough from the original to merit comparison.

This analysis, then, traces the evolution of "Les Chiens" (1972) to "Les Chiens" (1985) to analyze the story's generic conventions and their changes between versions of the story in the context of their publication. I begin by comparing cover art before conducting a scene-by-scene analysis. The differences between the two "Les Chiens" stories begin with the cover art. Although both versions were published in collections of sorts—"Les Chiens" (1972) in Issue 25 of *M'Quidèch* and "Les Chiens" (1985) in the album *Les hommes du djebel*—this story graces the cover of both publications (see Figure 8, top row). The cover art for *M'Quidèch* Issue 25 and *Les hommes du djebel* is in color, a limited resource, which further distinguishes the story and boldly announces the war hero figure who is depicted on both covers. That "Les Chiens" was chosen from all other stories in each collection for this place of prominence—twice—points to the medium's penchant for the Algerian War genre, possibly to the editorial influence in disseminating and popularizing such stories, and conceivably to the reputation and skill of Tenani himself.

Figure 8: Art from Tenani's "Les Chiens" appears on the cover of four publications: *Le Journal de M'Quidèch: La 1ère Bande Dessinée Algérienne*, Issue 25 (SNED 1972) [top left], *Les hommes du djebel* (ENAL 1985) [top right], *Le Journal de M'Quidèch* (ENAG 2003) [bottom left], and *Les hommes du djebel* (ENAG 2002) [bottom right].

The *M'Quidèch* (1972) cover duplicates two frames from the first page of "Les Chiens" (see Figure 8, top left image), while the cover of *Les hommes du djebel* (1985) (see Figure 8, top right image) features an image that appears in neither version of "Les Chiens". Whereas the magazine reader can make assumptions from the cover's two frames, which depict a man falling and a close-up of a pained face, the album cover succinctly reflects the essence of "Les Chiens" as it shows a lone figure pursued by dogs against a vast expanse of Algerian landscape. The album cover art demonstrates Mustapha Tenani's maturation as a cartoonist because using the cover to display new art, rather than replicate images from within the text, is a more sophisticated technique that reflects conventions of the medium beyond the Algerian context. Furthermore, the 21st-century re-editions of the magazine *Le Journal de M'Quidèch* (ENAG 2003) and the album *Les hommes du djebel* (ENAG 2002) contain their respective versions of "Les Chiens" and reproduce the original cover art from this story on their own covers, as seen in Figure 8, in the bottom row of images. In keeping with the relatively uniform appearance of the ENAG re-editions, these books are hardcover with glossy paper, with a scaled-down reproduction of the original cover art on a field of white on the front cover, with the title of the work appearing in large red letters on top of the art.

"Les Chiens" not only appears in four different publications, artwork from this story is also displayed in a place of prominence, on the cover of all four works in which it was published. This artwork also raises the question of authorship in *bande dessinée*, where the artist and author are not always the same person. The artwork on both original covers proudly bears Tenani's signature, which appears again on the re-publications of both works, to identify Tenani's role as artist for the cover art and the stories they represent—"Les Chiens" (1972) and "Les Chiens" (1985). The cover of *Les hommes du djebel* (1985) includes the line "par TENANI Mustapha"

under the title, thereby indicating that Mustapha Tenani is both the artist and the author of this work. However, the original "Les Chiens" (*M'Quidèch* 1972) credits the story to a collaboration between Boukhalfa Amazit and Mustapha Tenani (listed on the story's first page as "texte: Boukhalfa" and "dessin: Tenani Mus").[73] No mention is made of the Tenani-Boukhalfa collaboration in the album *Les hommes du djebel* (ENAL 1985, re-edition ENAG 2003).[74] However, the re-edition of *Le Journal de M'Quidèch* (ENAG 2003) acknowledges the names of collaborators: the back cover of the ENAG re-edition of the magazine provides a list of the men who contributed to the three issues contained in the re-edition collection, with Boukhalfa credited for "textes" and with Tenani listed among the "auteurs des dessins de M'Quidèch" and (*M'Quidèch* ENAG 2003).[75] Acknowledging that the story was born from a collaboration between Tenani (art) and Boukhalfa Amazit (author), I attribute both versions of "Les Chiens" to Mustapha Tenani. Finally, my referencing both "Les Chiens" as works by Tenani is for consistency and clarity (neither of which are provided by the publications themselves) and in

[73] In fact, all stories in this issue of the magazine attribute the "texte" to Boukhalfa. In the original "Les Chiens" (*M'Quidèch* 1972) and its re-edition in *Le Journal de M'Quidèch* (ENAG 2003), Mustapha Tenani's name appears multiple times but never with his full first name: the cover art is signed TENANI-MUS., the title page lists him as TENANI.MUS., and the final panel is signed TENANI (*M'Quidèch* 2003 1-6, original emphasis). The re-edition of *Le Journal de M'Quidèch* lists his full first name on the back cover but not within the story itself (ENAG 2003).

[74] In the updated "Les Chiens" (*Les hommes du djebel* 1985) and the album's re-edition (ENAG 2002), Mustapha Tenani's name appears multiple times: the album cover lists him as TENANI Mustapha, the cover art is signed Tenani, the title page lists him as tenani m., and the final panel is signed Tenani (*Les hommes du djebel* 1985 1-11, original emphasis).

[75] The back cover of *Le Journal de M'Quidèch* (ENAG 2003) lists the following individuals as "auteurs des dessins de M'Quidèch": Haroun Ahmed, Slim, Taibi Rachid, Aider Mahafoud, Zeghidour Slimane, Dade, Amouri Mansour, Melouah Sid-Ali, Tenani Mustapha, Assari Redouane, and Maz; their photographs appear under their names. Additionally, the back cover states "textes de Boukhalfa" and "Kapitia dessins et scenariis" (ENAG 2003).

order to center my analysis on Tenani's art and evolution as a *bédéiste*.

In what follows, I perform a scene-by-scene analysis of "Les Chiens" (*M'Quidèch* 1972) and "Les Chiens" (*Les hommes du djebel* 1985). Despite the fact that both versions of "Les Chiens" tell the same story in the same number of frames, I contend that "Les Chiens" (1985) does much more than rearrange and redistribute the original 39 frames. Not only does "Les Chiens" (1985) nearly double in page length, the physical album itself measures more than double the size of *M'Quidèch*, making their size difference similar to that of a Tintin album as compared to a Superman comic book.[76] The additional pages and inches give both creator and reader a new experience with a familiar story. Keeping in mind the album's longer and physically larger version of the story, I look at how meaning is created through changes ranging from the significant (e.g. updates to *mise-en-page*) to the slight (e.g. variations in punctuation marks), paying critical attention to conventions of the Algerian War genre as well as stylistic and narrative changes.

The original "Les Chiens" (1972) is told in 39 frames across six pages, where each page—or plate—presents roughly one scene. On the first page, in the dark of night, a fleeing man is pursued by dogs and trips and falls down an embankment (*M'Quidèch* 1), while the second page/scene shows the fallen protagonist finding the strength to get up and keep running from the dogs (*M'Quidèch* 2).[77] The third plate includes a flashback that shows that the man was

[76] The first issue of *M'Quidèch* measured 21,5x29 cm (Labter *Panorama* 77); all other issues were smaller at 17x24 cm (Labter *Panorama* 85). *Les hommes du djebel* (1985) and *De nos montagnes* both were published with the standard album size of the time at 22x29.5 cm (Labter *Panorama* 209, 215). In inches, the album measures 8.7x11.6 to the magazine's 6.7x9.5.

[77] While the magazine announces the story on the cover but presents "Les Chiens" after some other comics stories, the album announces "Les Chiens" on the cover then opens with this story, which also indicates the continuing importance of this wartime story.

imprisoned for killing a French colonel and escaped the night before his scheduled execution; then, as the pursuit continues, a shadowy armed figure appears and begins shooting (*M'Quidèch* 3). Next, French soldiers hear gunshots and continue their pursuit; meanwhile, Algerian soldiers find the protagonist, collapsed and only feet away from the dogs that they shot (*M'Quidèch* 4). The penultimate plate shows that despite the intense protests of his comrades, the protagonist insists on continuing alone, which escalates to his ordering them to leave at gunpoint (*M'Quidèch* 5). In the sixth and final scene, the hero fires into the air, giving away their position and thus forcing his comrades to flee, before waiting alone for the French soldiers who will surely kill him where he stands (*M'Quidèch* 6). It should be noted that, for ease of reading, I use the pagination 1-6 for the six pages/plates in the unpaginated "Les Chiens" (*M'Quidèch* 1972). The updated "Les Chiens" in *Les hommes du djebel* expands the story from the original six pages in *M'Quidèch* to ten pages plus the new cover artwork (see above for cover analysis).[78]

The variances in iterations of "Les Chiens" are evident from the opening scene, which triples in length in the album's "Les Chiens" (1985). The extended scene calls attention to the generic convention of the hero figure and his journey. Like the other comics in *Les hommes du djebel*, "Les Chiens" (1985) now starts with a title page which features the story's title—appearing in quotation marks as "les chiens" in bold lowercase lettering, which stands in contrast to the use of all capitalized lettering for comics at this time—followed by the *bédéiste*'s name. An image dominates this page. Serving as a splash panel of sorts, the image consists of a figure drawn onto the facsimile of a photograph. The addition of this page provides context for the

[78] My pagination for "Les Chiens" (2-11) in *Les hommes du djebel* (ENAL 1985) matches that of the album. "Les Chiens" (*M'Quidèch* 1972) occupies six pages in the magazine (six full plates, plus repeated cover art), and "Les Chiens" (*Les hommes du djebel* 1985) occupies ten pages in the album (ten full plates, plus the new cover art).

manhunt at the heart of this story. It is a photograph of a barbed wire fence with barracks and mountains in the background, and on top of this image is a sketched rendering of a man who is depicted as running away from the buildings and coming through the fence (*Les hommes du djebel* 2). This image establishes the protagonist as an escaped war criminal, while the original indicated this via his striped prisoner pants, which are visually evoked here through the crosshatching on his trousers. Not only is the escapee drawn on top of the photograph, he appears to be stepping out of the frame and into the page's gutter, thereby visually encoding the act of escape. The addition of this image on the title page changes the order in which the comic presents its characters, with the protagonist now appearing first, rather than the dogs who chase him. The opening scene of "Les Chiens" (1985) begins on the title page thanks to the narrative content it presents.

Figure 9: The opening scene in "Les Chiens" (1972) [left] and "Les Chiens" (1985) [right] highlights the variances in iterations (*M'Quidèch* 1; *Les hommes du djebel* 2-4).

In the magazine version of "Les Chiens" (1972), this opening scene is contained in six frames on one page (as are all the story's scenes) for which Tenani uses a complex page layout to meet the challenge of working with limited space. The original six panels are all included in some form in the later version, which does not simply replicate or rearrange these images. As seen in Figure 9, the first three frames in "Les Chiens" (1972) occupy a full page in "Les Chiens" (1985) where they are similarly organized to show the running and barking dogs; the treacherous nighttime landscape; and the man being pursued (*M'Quidèch* 1.1-1.3 and *Les*

hommes du djebel 3.1-3.3, respectively).[79] In "Les Chiens" (1985), the titular dogs are drawn in more detail that shows them to be Belgian Malinois or German shepherds, or a breed of dog used by police or military (3.1).[80] In both versions, the next image shows the small silhouette of the man who is running next to a cliff as rain pours from a dark nighttime sky where the dogs' onomatopoeic "Ouah! Ouah! Ouah! Ouah!" hangs over the man. In the third image in this grouping, the man takes up the entire frame, but his body language differs between versions. Whereas the original presents him flailing, the updated story depicts him running and saying "Courir! Plus vite! Ils ne doivent pas me prendre!" (3.3). This added dialogue points to the generic convention of depicting heroes who summon the strength to continue.

These modifications indicate that this man still stands a chance in this chase, which continues onto the next page. "Les Chiens" (1972) continues with frames depicting his pained face (1.4) and his legs in forward but falling motion (1.5); "Les Chiens" (1985) similarly shows his face (4.1) but replaces the image of his legs with one of him running and saying "Plus vite! Plus vite!" with onomatopoeic barking in the background (4.2). His body language matches that of the illustration on the title page with his foot stepping out of the frame replicated here. The scene ends with the escapee tripping and falling a great distance, which is emphasized in both versions by a vertical layout, as seen in Figure 9 (*M'Quidèch* 1.6 and *Les hommes du djebel* 4.3-4.4, respectively).[81] Extending this scene from one to three pages provides additional context for

[79] The images in Figure 9 are photographs I took of "Les Chiens" in *M'Quidèch* (2003) and "Les Chiens" in *Les hommes du djebel* (1985); this is the case for all figures featuring images from these texts.

[80] The original shows three dogs while the album version only shows two.

[81] The act of tripping receives its own frame in "Les Chiens" (1985) (as opposed to the original's incrustation in another frame); the gutter between these vertical frames indicates the time between the action in these two frames.

the story and highlights the protagonist's mission, which is now articulated in his speech balloons. Moreover, extending this scene works to highlight the struggle of the hero, a convention of the genre, as he sets off on his journey alone.

The second scene reveals that the protagonist survived his fall, and the original complex page layout remains intact in "Les Chiens" (1985). The hero's ability to keep going is shown in his declaration "Il faut que je me relève, je dois continuer!" (5.1)[82] that appears in a speech balloon rather than in a thought balloon, as well as by removing the frame from the image where he starts running again (5.3). These subtle changes reinforce the determined heroism that motivates many heroes in the Algerian War genre.

The plot of "Les Chiens" becomes increasingly intricate with the third scene's introduction of additional characters, both in the form of a flashback and in the main timeline. "Les Chiens" (1972) presents three narrative beats on this page: a flashback with the protagonist's sentencing (3.1), the dogs closing in on their target (3.2-3.5), and the firing of a weapon (3.6). "Les Chiens" (1985) implements stylistic and narrative changes to all of these moments (see both versions in Figure 10 below). The frame depicting the protagonist's flashback in "Les Chiens" (1985) is enlarged (occupying approximately two-thirds of the page rather than approximately one-fourth of it) but contains a similar image: a close-up of the protagonist and a thought balloon containing his impending sentence as declared by the French "Tu es un ennemi de la France! La France te condamne à mort! Tu seras fusillé à l'aube!.. À l'aube, tu ne verras pas le soleil!!.." (*Les hommes du djebel* 6.1). Changing the background both inside the flashback bubble and behind the protagonist—from wavy lines to white and black, respectively—visually

[82] This is written as "Il faut que je me relève. Je dois continuer!" in the original (*M'Quidèch* 2); changes in punctuation indicate that the album version was re-lettered in addition to being re-drawn.

differentiates the two temporalities; additionally, the new black background dotted with drops of rain reminds the reader of the harsh conditions and emphasizes the night's significance as potentially his last. It is now clear that the protagonist's goal is to survive the night, making his journey's destination not a place but a time. This frame's realistic style—rather than the original with its wavy lines and dreamlike effect (*M'Quidèch* 3)—better integrates this memory and the act of remembering into the narrative. The thought balloon itself emanates from the protagonist to whom it is also visible; as if watching his memory unfold, he looks toward the balloon and at the French soldiers drawn into this space as they announce his fate.[83]

Figure 10: This narrative turning point in "Les Chiens" (1972) [left] is reworked and expanded in "Les Chiens" (1985) [right] (*M'Quidèch* 3; *Les hommes du djebel* 6-7).

"Les Chiens" (1985) also joins past and present in the following frame, since the image represented in it breaches the gutter between frames and extends into the thought balloon

[83] The thought balloon includes at least four French soldiers in a line as well as a rendering of his own reaction in "Les Chiens" (1972), whereas "Les Chiens" (1985) shows only two French soldiers.

flashback, depicting the hero's exclamation of "Non! Vous ne m'aurez pas!" as addressed to the French soldiers who condemned him as well as to the dogs pursuing him (6.2). The remainder of the page is one large frame depicting the falling protagonist with the dogs on his heels and the new caption (*récitatif*) narrating what appears to be the hero's demise: "Las, l'homme s'effondra sur le sol… les chiens étaient sur lui!" (*Les hommes du djebel* 6.3). This moment was divided among three frames in the original, without the narration, and with the dogs and hero farther apart (*M'Quidèch* 3). These transformations make explicit the imminent danger facing the hero. What originally appeared at the bottom of this page/scene shifts to the top of the next page in the later version of this story: suddenly—as indicated by the caption "Soudain…"—a machine gun fires, but the shooter and target are not known (*M'Quidèch* 3.6 and *Les hommes du djebel* 7.1, respectively). Shifting this moment to another page affects the remainder of the story and breaks up the original one page per scene layouts, thus demonstrating the *bédéiste*'s advanced storytelling techniques in "Les Chiens" (1985).

The location of the aforementioned mystery gunman frame makes sense narratively for the next scene, as it appears just above the French soldiers who are "Non loin de là…" (7.2) and therefore hear the gunfire. While "Les Chiens" (1972) shows soldiers fighting on opposing sides of the war but sharing the space of the page, in "Les Chiens" (1985), the frames with the French soldiers appear on one page, while the frames with their Algerian counterparts are moved to the next page (7-8). In "Les Chiens" (1985), after hearing gunfire, a soldier announces that "Ça provient de la direction d'où les chiens ont été lâchés!" (7.3). This new line of dialogue replaces another line from a soldier who says "Le chien s'énerve! Il a trouvé une piste!" (*M'Quidèch* 4.3), since the album version does not depict additional dogs with the French troops. Alongside the dialogue regarding the gunfire and which direction to continue their search, the French soldiers

complain about the weather, with one grumbling “Et cette damnée pluie qui ne veut pas s’arrêter!” (7.4) in both versions and with the addition of “Foutu temps” (7.5) in a thought balloon by another soldier.

In contrast to the French soldiers on the recto, the Algerian soldiers on the verso of the same page do not mention the weather despite the fact that their cloth caps and gear are less suited to the rain than the French helmets. When the two Algerian soldiers approach the protagonist lying face down on the ground next to the bodies of the dogs, it becomes clear that one of them was the mystery shooter who took down the dogs just as they caught up to the protagonist. As he regains consciousness, the bearded Algerian tells the protagonist “Nous sommes des frères... Tu es sauvé… Tu viens avec nous” (8.3). Their actions and their words introduce the Algerian side as a brotherhood. Finally, the new distribution of frames separates the opposing forces by a turn of the page to highlight their differences and increases suspense between the hero’s fall and his rescue by a full page.

In the earlier, magazine version of this story, the penultimate scene depicts the argument between the protagonist who insists on continuing alone and the other Algerians who want him to leave with them, and the final scene continues their argument and shows the drastic measures the protagonist takes to ensure that he faces the French alone. As seen in Figure 11, what takes place in two pages in “Les Chiens” (1972) grows to fill four pages in “Les Chiens” (1985), where the initial distinction between scenes becomes less clear due to the distribution of frames (scene five is on pages 8.4-10.1, with six on pages 10.2-11.5 in the album). I therefore look at these final scenes together by performing a close reading of the dialogue by the three Algerian characters that dominates the end of the narrative, identifying generic conventions found within this conversation that run throughout the story.

Figure 11: The final scenes from "Les Chiens" (1972) [left] are reworked in "Les Chiens" (1985) [right] (*M'Quidèch* 5-6; *Les hommes du djebel* 8-11).

That the Algerian characters' dialogue remains largely unchanged (aside from changes in punctuation) between iterations of the story indicates the importance of this text. The conversation-turned-argument between the protagonist and his rescuers comes after the aforementioned statement by the bearded Algerian to the protagonist that "Nous sommes des

frères... Tu es sauvé… Tu viens avec nous" (*Les hommes du djebel* 8.3). While the following exchange stretches across the final pages of both versions of the story, the quotations below are from "Les Chiens" (1985):

> —"'Saha'…. Mais pour moi tout est fini… Je reste. Je savais d'ailleurs que j'allais mourir quand j'ai accepté de tuer le colonel 'Beaufort'. J'ai été condamné à mort par leur tribunal. Dommage, je voulais tant revoir le soleil... Mais les 'chiens' sont à mes trousses…" (8.4)[84]
>
> —"Partez! Laissez-moi une arme. Ils ne sont plus très loin!" (8.5)
>
> —"Non! Tu vas venir avec nous. Nous rejoindrons nos frères au djebel!" (8.5)
>
> —"J'entends des voix! Les français sont la!" (9.1)
>
> —"Il est trop tard pour fuir!.. " (9.3)
>
> —"Nous ne devons pas rester! C'est un vain sacrifice!" (9.3)
>
> —"Partez! Je suis armé! Allez-vous-en, je reste!" (9.5)
>
> —"Tu es fou! Tu ne pourras pas leur résister!" (9.5)
>
> —"Je vais les retenir le plus longtemps possible… Vous avez le temps de rejoindre les fidayine. Vous ne vous sacrifierez pas pour moi! Partez!" (10.1)
>
> —"De toutes les façons je ne ferai que vous alourdir. Je suis déjà à demi-mort… Mais je mourrai l'arme en main. Partez! On a besoin d'hommes comme vous, là-haut!" (10.2)
>
> —"Nous allons t'aider à les retenir jusqu'à l'arrivée des frères!" (10.2)[85]

[84] The text remains the same in the album version, except for changes in punctuation and the combining the lines "Mais les 'chiens' sont là. Ils sont à mes trousses!..." (*M'Quidèch* 5.1).

[85] The bearded rescuer says this line in "Les Chiens" (1985); it was said by the other rescuer in "Les Chiens" (1972).

—"Nous ne partirons pas!" (10.2)[86]

—"Pour la dernière fois, partez! Sinon je jure que c'est moi qui vous tuerai! Adieu!" (10.5)

—"Viens avec nous. Il est encore temps!" (11.2)

—"Non!" (11.3)

—"Cela vaut mieux ainsi... Cette pluie me fait du bien… Mais je préfère encore le soleil." (11.4)

—"Venez, chiens. Je vous attends!" (11.5)

The conversation opens and closes with the protagonist whose journey on this fateful night ends like it began—alone.

When explaining his death sentence to his brothers-in-arms, the protagonist repeats the image of seeing the light of day, saying: "Dommage, je voulais tant revoir le soleil…" (*Les hommes du djebel* 8.4). Later, the penultimate frame presents the hero's thoughts, with his thought balloon reading "Cela vaut mieux ainsi… Cette pluie me fait du bien… Mais je préfère encore le soleil" (*Les hommes du djebel* 11.4). The story takes place entirely over the course of one rainy night, and the darkness of the night sky presents a constant challenge for the fleeing protagonist. While night is represented visually through inky dark backgrounds or heavy shading, day is not referenced visually but rather it is evoked verbally multiple times. Although the entire story takes place in the rain, the downpour is not depicted as a trial for the protagonist. However, the weather presents a challenge for the French soldiers (see above). While preferential portrayal of Algerians could account for the differences in rain tolerance, subtle

[86] The rescuer in the long jacket says this line in "Les Chiens" (1985), but the bearded man said it in "Les Chiens" (1972).

changes in the second version of "Les Chiens"—i.e. the addition of "Foutu temps!" (*Les hommes du djebel* 7.5) in scene four and the increase in rainfall as the story progresses—suggest meaning. Perhaps the climate is less hospitable to the French soldiers who are not from this place; but for the protagonist, as an Algerian, as an *homme du djebel*, the weather suits him. The rainy nighttime setting in the mountains indicates a convention of the genre—the harsh climate and landscape of Algeria.

The hero also mentions *chiens* at the beginning and end of this conversation. True to the genre, the Algerian hero must face French opposition. In this story, the titular *chiens* are the harsh conditions of the journey as well as the enemy forces. The solo portion of the hero's saga is dominated by the presence of two dogs pursuing the protagonist. From the first page, the pair of dogs are depicted both visually and verbally—sometimes just visually or just verbally—to serve as a constant reminder of their threating presence. The use of the word "chiens" changes in the second half of the story once the dogs are shot down and the French soldiers continue their pursuit of the hero who is now with his brothers-in-arms. The change in meaning is made explicit in the hero's first words to his comrades as he explains his fate in the conversation above, saying "Dommage, je voulais tant revoir le soleil… Mais les 'chiens' sont à mes trousses…" (*Les hommes du djebel* 8.4); here "chiens" can refer to his pursuers both canine and human alike, but setting the word apart with quotation marks suggests the latter. Ambiguity is gone at the end when the actual *chiens* are no longer part of the narrative and the scare quotes are removed from around the word: "Venez, chiens je vous attends!" (*Les hommes du djebel* 11.5) appears in last frame in thought balloon.[87]

[87] The word *chien* is used pejoratively in the genre in "Le révolté" from *Les enfants de la liberté* by Brahim Guerroui (29, 31), as well as in Tenani's "Le Rescapé" from *Les hommes du djebel* (16, 21) and his "Le Survivant" from *De nos montagnes* (34, 35).

In the first half of the story, the hero's journey is individualized, concerning only his desire to survive the night; but self-preservation falls to the side once other Algerians are involved. His rescuers immediately introduce themselves as *frères*, a term which does not indicate their association with a militant or nationalist movement (as opposed to the hero's orders to kill Beaufort that indicate a group affiliation), although they bear the weapons of resistance fighters. When the hero says he will stay, the bearded brother responds saying "Non! Tu vas venir avec nous. Nous rejoindrons nos frères au djebel!" (8.5), with the repetition of *nous* suggesting that he is already part of their group and therefore part of *nos frères au djebel*. Their Algerian identity is enough to create a brotherhood in this text.

This bond of brotherhood or nationalism is at the heart of their argument. The hero knows his fate and repeatedly uses the imperative *partez* to tell them to leave him alone. When the French are nearing their location, one rescuer says that "Nous ne devons pas rester! C'est un vain sacrifice!" (9.3). The hero knows that it would be in vain for the three of them to wait for the French, so he later responds that "Je vais les retenir le plus longtemps possible… Vous avez le temps de rejoindre *les fidayine*. Vous ne vous sacrifierez pas pour moi! Partez!" (10.1, my emphasis). In both of these instances, sacrifice is used to refer to avoidable deaths. Furthermore, the hero's dialogue differs slightly between iterations of "Les Chiens", with the original reading "Vous avez le temps de rejoindre *les partisans*!" (*M'Quidèch* 5.8, my emphasis). The change from *les partisans* to *les fidayine* suggests an alignment between the struggle in Algeria and others from the Arab world.[88] Brotherhood here extends beyond Algerian nationalism to a

[88] *Fidayine* is defined by CNRTL.fr as "Combattant palestinien menant la lutte armée pour recouvrer sa patrie" (cnrtl.fr/definition/fidayin). In addition to the Palestine connection suggested here, *De nos montagnes* included the poem "À propos d'un homme" (21) by the celebrated Palestinian poet and author Mahmoud Darwish.

Muslim brotherhood.

In the end, the protagonist sacrifices himself so that the others can survive, but he forces them into this situation. After stealing one of their weapons, he fires it intentionally to give away their position and to force his brothers to leave. What began as a story of personal survival turns to self-sacrifice in order for the survival of his comrades who ultimately represent national survival. Sacrifice, or secular martyrdom, in the name of a greater good is yet another convention of the Algerian War genre. McDougall has written of martyrdom that, based on numbers put forth by the FLN's mouthpiece *El Moudjahid* in 1959 of one million Algerian causalities, the death toll was fixed from 1962 at "the entirely symbolic, and demographically impossible, figure of 1.5 million martyrs" (*A History of Algeria* 232). Another generic convention is the death of the protagonist, which is a likely outcome in this story and particularly "Les Chiens" (1985) where the hero holds his weapon but is not at the ready (see Figure 11).

Reading "Les Chiens" reveals the many generic conventions that this story exemplifies, but comparing the two iterations of "Les Chiens" provides a deeper understanding of these conventions and their meaning in the texts. The comparative reading of this story's iterations also acknowledges the artistic challenges of creating comics within the limited page space and under the guidelines at *M'Quidèch* met by the young cartoonist in "Les Chiens" (1972) while also recognizing the developments in the cartoonist's style over time in "Les Chiens" (1985).

Conclusion

The first section of this chapter shows that the legacy of *M'Quidèch* is perhaps best identified in its connections to the evolution of Algerian comics, its conventions, and its cartoonists like Mustapha Tenani who, alongside other young cartoonists, were told what to draw

and taught how to draw it. Although I have yet to find secondary work that would reveal the ideologies and feelings of these cartoonists regarding the pro-FLN messaging at *M'Quidèch*, it would seem that the environment at the magazine was not for everyone. For example, Slim was only involved with *M'Quidèch* for the first issue because he did not agree with the control over content, citing a disagreement over how he illustrated his camels as, one could say, the straw that broke the camel's back (Labter *Panorama* 126-127). The second and third sections of the chapter explore stories from Tenani's corpus on the war for independence to delineate the Algerian War Genre as put forth by in his work.

A member of the first generation of Algerian *bédéistes*, Mustapha Tenani's oeuvre exemplifies the prominence of the medium's Algerian War genre, which crosses formats and spans decades due to the cyclical nature of comics publishing. The stories he illustrated as a teen at *M'Quidèch* reappeared in album form in the 1980s and, in some instances, emerged again in the 21st century in a state-sponsored revival of the medium. This revival happened in two waves: first, the re-publication of comic books for *Djazaïr, une année de l'Algérie en France* in 2003, and second, the renewed interest in the medium following the first FIBDA in 2008. Considering that the 2003 books, many of which were re-editions of the Algerian War genre from the 1980s, were edited and published by the state-run ENAG (*Entreprise nationale des arts graphiques*), and considering that the FIBDA is an endeavor of the Ministry of Culture, political ideology continues to inform Algerian comics production.[89] Perhaps notwithstanding the cartoonist's politics (which remain unknown to me at this point in my research), his oeuvre was among the albums chosen for re-publication in 2003, and he has served as a judge at FIBDA, both of which

[89] These books were published by ENAG in 2002 and 2003 in Algiers. The books are re-editions, some of which were lost until this point (Labter *Panorama* 69).

solidify his status as a pioneer of Algerian *bande dessinée* whose work in the Algerian War Genre continues to be relevant and visible for a new generation of consumers and creators of *bande dessinée*.

CHAPTER TWO

Nuancing the Algerian War Genre:
Drawing and Defining Difference in *Le village oublié* by Benattou Masmoudi

Face à la barbarie aveugle du colonialisme, le peuple algérien a vite compris que la liberté ne s'achète pas, mais s'arrache au bout du fusil au prix du sang et du sacrifice. L'histoire a inscrit en lettres de feu et de sang, la lutte, la misère, la souffrance de notre peuple, face à la domination colonialiste.
—Prologue, *Le village oublié*

As announced by this succinct prologue, the fight for independence is at the heart of this *album de bande dessinée*. While contemporary prologues also extol the Algerian people, Benattou Masmoudi's *Le village oublié* (ENAL 1983) renders into visual-verbal narrative the experience of the Algerian people who animate the prologue. This text calls into question how history is written and thereby represented. "L'histoire a inscrit" begins the prologue's second sentence, with its phrasing that suggests that history itself (the sentence's subject) performs the act of inscription, thus removing the human hand that writes and draws history. However, the prologue shares space with other material on the book's title page: the hand-lettered prologue text is next to an illustration of an armed Algerian soldier (this image bears Masmoudi's signature), both of which are below the title *Le village oublié* and "textes et dessins: B. Masmoudi". The interplay of this byline, the signed illustration, and the prologue calls attention to how comics and their creators engage with history. In *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form*, Hillary Chute argues that by, "Activating the past on the page, comics materializes the physically absent. It inscribes and concretizes, through the embodied labor of drawing, 'the spatial charge of a presence,' the tactile presence of a line, the body of the

medium. The desire is to make the absent appear" (27).[90] All of these elements work together to show what is at stake: how history is represented and what forces are behind this representation.

Creator of many *albums de bande dessinée*, Benattou Masmoudi (1955-) is well known in Algeria for his use of the medium to depict the nation's history. The Algerian War for Independence appears in *La montagne embrasée* (SNED circa 1978) and *Le village oublié* (ENAL 1983).[91] Resistance during the 19th century is the subject of *L'histoire de l'Algérie en bandes dessinées: L'épopée du Cheikh Bouamama* (1986) and *L'Émir Abdelkader* (1983).[92] Various moments in history are told through stories of corsairs and travelers in others like *Tariq Ibn Zyad* (n.d.), *Raïs Hamidou* (1980), *Barberousse: Raïs Aroudj, L'homme au bras d'argent* (1991), and *Barberousse: Kheireddine, Le lion des mers* (1991).[93] A graduate of l'école

[90] She uses materialize in Spiegelman's sense: to bring into material form on the page (26).

[91] *La montagne embrasée* was likely published by SNED circa 1978. The biography on the back of *L'épopée du Cheikh Bouamama* (ENAL 1986) puts that year as 1978. Labter lists the publisher as SNED (*Panorama* 216) and the publication date as 1975 (*Panorama* 244), while Ferhani puts that date as early as 1972 (*50 Ans* 36-37).

[92] *L'histoire de l'Algérie en bandes dessinées: L'épopée du Cheikh Bouamama* (ENAL 1986) was intended to be a series, as indicated by "fin de la première partie" (51) at the end of the book. I have yet to find the other volumes. Labter lists three volumes from 1985 (*Panorama* 244), while the biography on the back of the 2003 ENAG Masmoudi re-editions lists two volumes. *L'Émir Abdelkader* is often included in lists of Masmoudi's work (see the biographies on the back of *L'épopée du Cheikh Bouamama,* ENAL 1986 and the 2003 ENAG Masmoudi re-editions). Labter dates it to 1983 (*Panorama* 244). Given its publication year, as listed by Labter, the publisher is likely ENAL.

[93] *Raïs Hamidou* is often included in lists of Masmoudi's work (see the biographies on the back of *L'épopée du Cheikh Bouamama,* ENAL 1986 and the 2003 ENAG Masmoudi re-editions). Labter dates it to 1980 (*Panorama* 244). *Tariq Ibn Zyad* and *Barberousse: Raïs Aroudj, L'homme au bras d'argent; Barberousse: Kheireddine, Le lion des mers* are Masmoudi's works that were republished in 2003 by ENAG. For *Tariq Ibn Zyad* (spelled as *Tarik Ibn Zyad* on the original cover), the original publisher and year is unknown. The *Barberousse* re-edition contains two works *Raïs Aroudj* (6-51) and *Kheireddine* (54-99), originally published by *Alif, Les éditions de la méditerranée* in 1991.

nationale des beaux-arts d'Alger (1976), Masmoudi is a formally-trained artist who worked in television as a set designer in addition to his work in *bande dessinée*. Praise for his work as a "bédéiste aux talents prometteurs" came as early as 1986, as seen in the following biographical excerpt:

> La variété de ses dons, font de lui un créateur qui s'exprime par une abondante production qui le font accéder au rang des meilleurs auteurs de bande dessinée dans notre pays. *Raïs Hamidou*, *Le village oublié*, *L'Émir Abdelkader* et tout récemment *Cheikh Bouamama* démontrent l'intérêt qu'accorde Masmoudi pour les hauts-faits de la résistance nationale et ses travaux peuvent être considéré comme une importante contribution de l'écriture de notre histoire. (ENAL 1986)[94]

More recently, Masmoudi was honored at the 5th FIBDA in 2012 as a featured artist whose work represented the festival theme of 50 years since independence and at the 7th FIBDA in 2014 where he won a top award—le prix patrimoine Sid Ali Melouah—for his lifetime of work.[95]

Despite Masmoudi's popularity and reputation in Algeria, *Le village oublié* remains difficult to find outside of Algeria. The album was produced in 1983 by the state's main publishing house *Entreprise nationale du livre* (ENAL) and printed by *Entreprise nationale des arts graphiques* (ENAG), thereby keeping the album's production under the watchful eye of the state (see the Dissertation Introduction for more on the state's role in comics production). The soft-cover album (31 cm) retailed for 11,64 DA. The book is printed in black and white, with the cover art in color. The realistic drawing style renders scenic landscapes as backdrops for a

[94] This citation appears on the back cover *of L'histoire de l'Algérie en bandes dessinées: L'épopée du Cheikh Bouamama* (1986).

[95] See "Un monde de bulles!" in Liberté Algérie and "Le FIBDA 2014 se prepare et lance ses concours" and "Alger au programme du FIBDA 2014" in *Vinyculture* for more on the festival.

multitude of visually-distinct characters. The album is hand-lettered with its text written all in capital letters. This one-shot album tells a single story across its 46 pages, in addition to its non-paginated but illustrated prologue and epilogue.[96]

The richness of *Le village oublié* provides many ways in which to approach it. I place this album in a larger corpus of comics in what this dissertation establishes as the Algerian War Genre, meaning it depicts the war and is published as a larger effort by the post-war government to legitimize the FLN/ALN leadership during the war and therefore during independence. The content of these comics is highly regulated and often similar, adhering to certain generic conventions. While my first chapter on Mustapha Tenani examined eight of his stories within the Algerian War Genre told through compressed storytelling, this chapter appreciates the decompressed storytelling of one album. This chapter argues that *Le village oublié* investigates the war as experienced by a variety of characters and from differing perspectives in order to create a more complete picture of the war. In what follows, I analyze the ways in which Masmoudi deviates from the genre to nuance it with regard to storytelling and narration, representing differing political views, and including female characters.[97]

A plot summary of *Le village oublié* illustrates the complexity of Masmoudi's story that sets this album apart from its contemporaries, while taking into account that my reader might not have access to the text. The setting for *Le village oublié* is a village at the base of the Aurès Mountains, a location rich in symbolism for the Algerian resistance. The story begins in

[96] The paginated story starts on page 2 and ends on page 47. Additionally, the prologue and epilogue pages contain text and one image each.

[97] The primary text in this chapter has not been translated into English; the English equivalent for the title *Le village oublié* is *The Forgotten Village* (my translation), even though the French *oublié* can mean abandoned or forgotten.

September of 1962, just months after the end of the war for independence, with an unnamed old man who remembers the devastation caused by the French military (2-3). Aside from this short but significant scene, the remainder of the story takes place in December of 1956 and tells of a series of violent attacks and escalating retaliatory acts. The 1956 timeline starts with a scene depicting a breadline in the village, where a *harki* named Belaid verbally assaults the villagers before physically assaulting an old woman named Khedidja and her daughter (4-7). One week later, Belaid's wife, Mahdjouba, is approached by a young Algerian *djoundi* (i.e. soldier) who was sent down from his unit in the mountains to inquire about the *harki* who attacked the mother and sister of two men from his unit—Allel and Djaffar. It is by chance that the *djoundi* came across the wife of the perpetrator, and Mahdjouba keeps this fact to herself when she asks the *djoundi* to return the following day so she can give him an update (8-10). The *djoundi* returns the next day but is ambushed by French soldiers who he evades and fights, outnumbered and outgunned, until he dies from his wounds; per the French captain's orders, his men take the *djoundi*'s body into the center of town where it is displayed for all to see (11-17). The next scene is set in the mountains where a group of Algerian fighters plan their retaliation against Belaid the *harki* before deciding to also plan an attack on the French troops (18-19); their unit is led by a man named Haoues who approves of the plan to avenge the death of one of their own (Nacer, the *djoundi*) and also to punish the *harki* who assaulted the mother and sister of two brothers (Allel and Djaffar) in his unit.

Their intricate plan plays out over the second half of the book. A team of five men from Haoues' unit, led by fighters named Mourad and Brahim, sneak into the village after nightfall where they murder a group of French guards in a fort (20-21), kill Belaid and Mahdjouba in their home (22-24), retrieve the body of their friend Nacer, then take off on foot for the bridge that

serves as their meeting point (25). The next scene shows the French unit, led by the nameless Capitaine and his Sergent, as they react to the situation and pile into Jeeps and trucks to follow Mourad's team, who has a significant head start (26-28). Meanwhile, Haoues and his team have rigged the bridge with explosives (29-31). Haoues' men hold their fire until he finally gives the signal; one team detonates the explosives when the majority of the French vehicles are crossing the bridge, while another team surrounds the French, and others begin firing from their position on the bluffs (36-39). The coordination of the Algerian effort becomes clear when, back at the military camp, another Algerian unit opens fire on every French soldier they come across, before raiding then destroying the French munitions depot (40-43). The battle rages on at the bridge, where the munitions explosion is felt and heard, and the Capitaine realizes the extent of the surprise attack (43). The Capitaine arrives back at the burning camp and orders the Sergent to fire upon the village (44-45). The final scene depicts the massacre of the village (46-47).

Seeing, Silence, and Storytelling

Masmoudi's *Le village oublié* fits solidly within the Algerian War genre corpus of Algerian comic books, but the book's complex narrative structure is one way in which this book differentiates itself from other works in the genre.[98] Narration draws attention to how stories and histories are told or not; that this *bande dessinée* broaches the subject of remembering what one saw—rather than reporting past events—poses a threat to the state's version of the war. *Le village oublié* opens with a two-page scene that features a survivor of the massacre that destroyed the titular village (see Figure 12 below). The opening lines situate the story in terms of time and place: "Un matin de septembre 1962… Un soleil radieux diluait les dernières brumes

[98] I am using difference, in Neale's sense, as it applies to genre theory.

matinales qui couronnaient majestueusement le djebel Aurès" (2.1). At the end of this short scene, the geographical location remains the same, but the closing lines the move the story into the recent past: "…Tout commença par une froide et morne journée de décembre 1956…" (3.3) when "…non loin du village, un poste militaire français était implanté" (3.4). Masmoudi's penchant for using ellipses as punctuation marks is evident here. This scene distinguishes itself from the remainder of the book in that all text is presented through captions, meaning there are no other textual elements such as speech and thought balloons, onomatopoeia, or images featuring textual elements (e.g. the headline on a newspaper drawn into the illustrations).[99] In comics studies, caption refers to the framed (or unframed) space that contain text—which is hand-lettered in this book—that comments on the action taking place or that provides an intervention by a narrator, as well as the text itself.[100]

I examine the book's opening scene and its lone character in detail below to illustrate the levels of narration and variations in focalization that work together in the book; I then turn to this lone character's only other appearance in the book for a continued analysis of seeing and silence that follows him. Using comics narratology and its concepts of focalization and ocularization to read the book's opening scene, I ask the following questions.[101] What is the role of the old man

[99] In fact, Masmoudi does not employ images featuring textual elements in this work. His *Tariq Ibn Zyad* (ENAG 2003) provides examples of images with textual elements, such as Masmoudi's rendering of 8th century architecture adorned with Arabic calligraphy (51.8).

[100] I use the English term "caption" for the French *récitatif*. The French *didascalie* (or stage direction) can also be used in place of *récitatif*. See the citebd.org glossary for more *bande dessinée* definitions and terms: from *la Cité Internationale de la bande dessinée et de l'image* in Angoulême (citebd.org/spip.php?article222).

[101] In literary theory, there are multiple schools of thought for narratology. Attempting to define terms and concepts in comics theory is even more complicated than its literary—that is, novelistic—counterpart due to the visual and verbal aspects of the medium. See Gardner and Herman for more on comics narratology.

in the scene and in the overall book? What is the relationship between seeing and memory, and between silence and memory?

The opening frame features an old man—*le vieillard*—who is depicted in the foreground looking out over the titular village as the sun rises over the mountain in the background, as seen in Figure 12 below.[102] The village is in ruins. This establishing shot occupies more than half the page, which indicates the importance of the visual in this scene. While the image itself draws the reader's attention to what the old man sees, the accompanying text emphasizes silence, or rather the inability to speak, which is evoked twice in the caption: "Un matin de septembre 1962… Un soleil radieux diluait les dernières brumes matinales qui couronnaient majestueusement le djebel Aurès. 'Si cette montagne pouvait parler…' se disait le vieillard assis, immobile, devant une cabane, absorbé par une muette contemplation…" (2.1). The mountain itself of course cannot speak; the old man sits in silent contemplation, and his words appear here in the caption, rather than in a speech balloon, which calls the reader's attention to the act of speaking or not. From this establishing shot, it is clear that *le vieillard* plays an important role in how this story is told. He is not the story's narrator here, which we know because the caption contains a quote from him. Rather, he is the focalizer through whom the story is to be perceived and understood. Furthermore, this shot employs visual focalization, or ocularization, which means that the reader not only knows what the old man is thinking but we also are privy to what he sees.[103] This image

[102] The image in Figure 12 is a photograph I took of *Le village oublié*; this is the case for all figures featuring images from this text.

[103] In "Talking, Thinking, and Seeing in Pictures: Narration, Focalization, and Ocularization in Comics Narratives" Derik Badman distills decades of work on narratology in various media into a cohesive unit. Per Badman's synthesis and elaboration of these terms, Gerard Genette's concept of focalization asks about point of view in what is being narrated (Badman 93-96). Other scholars have since built upon and added contributions to the concept of focalization, with Rimmon-Kenan's facets of focalization being particularly useful for comics studies, especially

is known as a "vision with" image, where the reader "sees along with the character, often showing the character from behind in the foreground and the object of this character's gaze in the background" (Badman 96).[104] Through ocularization, the reader sees what the old man witnessed.

The next frame shows the old man's face in a close-up shot, which means that the ocularization has shifted from the first image. This image is an example of external ocularization, meaning that the focalizing character is seen from the outside. The text in the accompanying caption describes *how* he looks at village: "Caressant d'un regard triste chaque maison en ruine ainsi qu'une plaie muette…" (2.2). The use of *muette* a second time in the second frame (within the same sentence due to the ellipses as punctuation) solidly establishes the theme of silence, while seeing is likewise emphasized by the visual focus on the old man's face as well as the caption which underscores the image. The ocularization shifts yet again in the third and final panel on this opening page, which features the aforementioned houses in ruins, and the accompanying caption describing the houses as a "Vivant souvenir d'un cauchemar qui a pour nom guerre" (2.3). The houses are a visual reminder of the horror that he witnessed. The old man, the focalizer, is not visibly present in this frame, but his visual field is represented, thus using internal ocularization to visually tell his story. The reader sees what he sees.

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the perceptive facet as it deals with the visual aspect of focalization (Badman 93-96). Like Badman, I use Francois Jost's term "ocularization" to indicate visual focalization (93-96).

[104] As cited in Badman (96), "vision with" is Lavanchy's term.

Figure 12: The old man remembers what he witnessed of the war (*Le village oublié* 2-3).

These houses, on the following page, become not only a visual reminder of the war but a witness to the war, as we discover in the caption that continues describing them: “Au pied de la montagne, quelques murs se dressaient encore fièrement pour témoigner de ce qui reste d’un village jadis paisible, victime d’une vengeance aveugle…” (3.1). The buildings are visual witnesses—*témoins occulaires*—not verbal ones; each destroyed home tells of the tragedy that happened there. The “vengeance aveugle” that destroyed the village is part of the larger “barbarie aveugle du colonialisme” from the prologue. In counterpoint to this blind destruction, the old man not only saw but continues to see anew the destruction of his village, as the reader learns more about him in the next frame via the caption that reads “Rare survivant de ce

massacre, *le vieillard revoyait*, les larmes aux yeux tous ceux qui sont tombés devant lui, victimes impuissantes des représailles de l'armée ennemie, à la suite des lourdes défaites infligées par les vaillants moudjahidine" (3.2, my emphasis). The old man is shown seated in a medium long shot, and although it is unclear from the image what the old man is looking at, as the caption indicates, the image shows his face and the tears in his eyes. While the caption and image contain redundancies in that the caption describes the image as we see it, without additional detail, this further emphasizes the act of seeing and remembering. To remember is to see again, to *revoir*, as the old man does.

This scene ends with two images of the military camp with their respective captions reading: "…Tout commença par une froide et morne journée de décembre 1956…" (3.3) and "…non loin du village, un poste militaire français était implanté" (3.4). Here, the old man serves as the narrator, with his thoughts appearing in the caption. This shift in narration is indicated visually as three circles drawn inside the previous caption; these circles mimic the shape of the tail on a thought balloon. An extreme close-up of the old man's eyes appears within the final panel, using encrustation, a comics technique where a smaller panel appears within a larger one. The effect of this is to show the old man (here the narrator) re-seeing, thereby indicating that in what follows, the reader will see for the first time what the old man is re-seeing. This is not to suggest that the old man is the narrator or even focalizer for the 1956 narrative, but rather I read this figure as the book's guiding focalizer. He is a reliable focalizer for the reader who moved through the open scene from what the old man saw, to what he sees, to what he re-sees, to what the reader will see. The reader will consume the story as the old man saw it happen in 1956, but the verbal—here, textual—aspect of the narration remains ambiguous as the focalization of the captions remains ambiguous throughout the book and could be characterized as *discours indirect*

libre.[105] However, the ambiguity serves to remind the reader that the old man's speech is mediated by someone else, which reflects the controlled conditions behind the production of this book. It also allows for the album to present multiple perspectives.

The old man's only other appearance in *Le village oublié* is also rendered visually and verbally using themes of seeing and silence, which function differently here. This scene takes place during the 1956 timeline, and the reader is witnessing a horrific spectacle as it is happening in the narrative. The action takes place after the French soldiers have killed the young man who was set up by the *harkis* but before the Algerian soldiers retaliate. This scene presents a pivotal moment in the narrative: after finding the body of the young Algerian man, French soldiers roar into town in a Jeep from which they dump the body into the street. The body is hung up for all to see, and *le vieillard* is but one of many witnesses. A double witnessing takes place in this scene: the characters and the reader witness the spectacle. The *mise-en-pag*e for both pages is sophisticated, and this layout has consequences for both characters and reader as witnesses. With the book opened, the page on the left (page 16) shows the Jeeps roaring into town, the body thrown from the vehicle, and the body once it has been hung up yet not this gruesome process itself; as seen in Figure 13, the page on the right (page 17) is dedicated to looking at the body and looking at those who are looking at the body (page 17).

This gruesome show of power is witnessed by villagers and French soldiers alike. The old man appears in this scene as a character in the story who, like the other villagers, is forced to see the "horreur du spectacle" (17.4). The body is displayed in the middle of the village, the

[105] Examples of ambiguous focalization that could be characterized as *discours indirect libre* in *Le village oublié* include the caption revealing Mahdjouba's fear of the *djoundi* via third-person narrative voice (9.5) as opposed to the contemplative caption (see below for analysis) that repeatedly asks "Que dire" in the first-person voice of the old man as a character and narrator (17.6).

intent of which is made clear by the words of the French officer who says "J'offre en prime un spectacle à tous ceux qui voudraient se rebeller contre nous," with the smoke from his cigar matching the tail of his speech balloon (16.4). The term *spectacle* is used three times on this two-page spread and again on the following page. In fact, when the reader turns the page, the next scene shows the Algerian fighters planning their retaliation against the French soldiers who killed their comrade but moreover "exposent sa dépouille en spectacle" (18.3). The treatment of the body affects their decision making, as their first retaliatory plan is to recuperate the body, or, rather, to remove it from sight and from being a spectacle.

If the body is the spectacle, then the villagers, the French soldiers, and the reader are the spectators. A full page is dedicated to looking at the body and watching the other spectators as they look at the body. The top half of the page, at first glance, seems to present a triptych of images: the body is in the middle and on either side are two panels depicting characters looking from their own panels toward the body. The grammar of comics is such that the reader consumes panels from left to right starting with the top tier then moving down in the same left to right order, much like how one consumes a novel.[106] In this case, that means that the triptych reads as follows: French soldiers and Belaid look to the right (with their gaze directed toward the body's location on the page, which is outside of the panel containing their depiction) as the captain says "Tfou! Il n'a eu que ce qu'il mérite!" (17.1); the next panel depicts the body but contains no text (17.2); then more French soldiers look to their left toward the body as a soldier chimes in with "Voilà ce que j'appelle du bon travail!" (17.3). Continuing in the next tier, Algerian villagers of all ages look toward the body (17.4), which appears in the same center panel that spans both tiers

[106] This, of course, changes when the language of the text is one that reads from right to left or another order. The grammar of manga, for example, is different from that of the *bande dessinée* in question.

(17.2), then more villagers look left toward the body (17.5). Captions narrate the villagers' experience: "Devant l'horreur du spectacle, les villageois…" (17.4) "… gardaient difficilement leur calme" (17.5), with the text split between two panels. The *mise-en-page* thus far means that the reader must look at the body twice, once in the first tier and again in the second. But comics consumption is such that that the reader has a choice in their pacing;[107] one can linger on the image of the body as the villagers are forced to, or one can move quickly past this image.

The triptych highlights the silence on the part of the Algerians. While the French characters are given speech balloons, the Algerian characters' reactions are described in captions. In fact, no Algerian characters speak in this scene. Whereas on the previous page, the villagers "restèrent muets d'horreur" (16.3) when the body of the young man is thrown from the Jeep, they are not rendered speechless in the moment as they gaze upon the body. Rather their silence is a choice. The villagers "gardaient difficilement leur calme" (17.5), likely as a form of self-preservation. Breaking their silence could have fatal consequences.

[107] See Chute's introduction to *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form* on how the reader sees comics violence in terms of pacing (22).

Figure 13: The body of Si Nacer is put on display (*Le village oublié* 17).

The remainder of the page—and the remainder of this scene—focuses on the old man's reaction to the scene unfolding before him. Again, the image of the body appears on the page, but this time it is seen from below. It is a striking image that displays the soles of the dead man's boots. The old man is not in this frame, but his visual field is represented as the reader sees the body from his point of view as he is sitting on the ground. This image of the body is accompanied by a caption, thereby breaking the trend of presenting the body in a silent frame—that is, one without text. The lengthy caption presents the following contemplation: "Que dire de ceux qui d'un côté riaient aux larmes et de ceux qui d'un autre côté pleuraient des larmes de sang? Que dire du corps de ce jeune héros victime d'une trahison offert en spectacle du village? Que dire de ceux qui lui jetaient des pierres et de ceux qui auraient aimer [sic] le couvrir de fleurs?" (17.6). The phrase "que dire" begins each of the three sentences that question the use (or uselessness) of words in such a situation. The question "Que dire de ceux qui d'un côté riaient aux larmes et de ceux qui d'un autre côté pleuraient des larmes de sang?" (17.6) can be read as the old man's thoughts as he processes what is happening; he struggles to find words to describe the other witnesses. Feelings manifest as tears, rather than words, which are too dangerous for the villagers to utter now. The circles drawn under the text but within the caption box itself evoke the bubbles in the tail of the old man's thought balloon in the next frame.

The final panel depicts the old man who is seated with his back against a wall, facing the reader. He is positioned to see all: the body, the French soldiers, the villagers, and even the reader. His thought balloon reads: "Vous pouvez vous acharner sur le corps autant que vous voudrez. Mais son âme immortelle vous regarde déjà avec pitié!" (17.7). The old man reacts in the moment to the jeering onlookers, and although he directly addresses them as *vous*, they do not hear him, but his thoughts nevertheless exist in the diegetic world of the story. Furthermore,

the use of the verb *regarder* in this thought balloon creates another layer of meaning, as the reader looks at the old man who is looking at the body whose soul is looking at the people in the crowd.

Lastly, despite the old man's overall role in the book as the guiding focalizer, he is but a minor character in the book. This character represents the act of remembering, which is conveyed through a vocabulary of seeing and silence in his appearance on but three of the book's 46 pages. The opening scene (2-3) establishes that he is the guiding focalizer whose memory of the past gives the reader access to what he witnessed during the war, while the spectacle scene (17) provides the reader evidence of the old man's lived experience as a witness to the horrors of the war, thereby ensuring his reliability as the focalizer. The narrative ends in the analepsis, never returning to the 1962 timeline. However, the story circles back—in a way—to the 1962 timeline by evoking its visual imagery. Just as narrative's first frame depicts the destroyed village with the mountain and sunrise in the background, so does its final frame. Although the old man is absent in the later image, the reader now sees the titular village from the position he previously occupied. He is gone but his memories stay with the reader.

Defining ourselves, defining others

Le village oublié provides a detailed story of escalating violence and retaliatory acts committed by Algerian and French forces alike, although the book privileges the perspective of the Algerian resistance since it is, of course, a piece of state-sanctioned history published during the single-party era. A variety of characters populate the story, which is rich with dialogue. This section looks at the types of characters represented in the book and how they are depicted, paying special attention to how individuals and groups are defined. What groups are represented

in this story? How are they drawn and described? Who is excluded? Who belongs? What information is conveyed to the reader by the narration and by dialogue? In what follows, I perform a close reading of how the characters and groups in the story are described and depicted, beginning with the villagers and the incident that puts everything into motion, then with those fighting on both sides.

Let us first look at who inhabits the titular village, as these characters' interactions are the plot device driving the narrative at hand. In the four-page scene that opens the 1956 narrative, the reader meets Belaid, Khedidja, and Khedidja's adult daughter, and their interaction in this scene initiates the series of escalating events that punctuate the narrative. Belaid is working in the ration line where he verbally assaults the villagers in line (4) before physically assaulting Khedidja, an old woman (5). Belaid then attacks her daughter who fights back (6), only to be met with more violence (7). Examining the verbal abuse in this scene reveals a variety of political perspectives among the villagers.

By depicting civilian life during the war, the scene functions as a reminder of the war's widespread effect on everyone in Algeria. The newness of the term *harki* indicates the shifting societal roles.[108] The opening caption sets the stage for the scene, especially regarding Belaid: "Réduits à la famine et la misère, les villageois étaient à la merci du camp militaire qui rationnait les vivres, aidé par Belaid, un harki qui ne ménageait point sa hargne et ses injures" (4.2). Already painted in a negative light, Belaid's own words further illustrate his character, as he harasses the villagers in the food line, saying "Allez remue-toi chien!" (4.3), "La France vous nourrit et pour la remercier, vous venez en aide aux hors-la-loi, ces maudits fellagas!" (4.4), and

[108] Stora dates the term *harki* to 1955, from the word movement in Arabic (Stora *Histoire dessinée* 47). The term *harki*, as defined within the text itself, therefore applies to French sympathizers or traitors, even civilians who do not see actual combat.

“Allez, avance paresseux, si j’étais à la place du capitaine, je vous laisserais tous crever de faim” (5.1). These are Belaid’s first lines of dialogue. His words not only insult the people with whom he is speaking but reveal this character’s position on the war through the use of terms like *hors-la-loi* and *maudits fellagas* (the latter term is examined in depth below) to refer to the local Algerian resistance fighters.

Belaid is immediately aggressive with Khedidja, an older woman, when she and her adult daughter encounter him in the ration line. His verbal and physical attack on her appears to be unprovoked, or, rather her presence is enough to set him off. He yells at her, with the spiked tails of his speech balloon indicating volume and emotion: “Tu as donc faim, vieille folle! Tes enfants du djebel t’ont-ils donc oublié? Dégage ici il n’y a pas de place pour toi!” (5.4). The *tutoiement* of the older woman (despite Belaid’s *vouvoyment* of the other victims of his verbal tirade) indicates intentional disrespect or familiarity. Perhaps it is both, as he knows that her “enfants du djebel” are not present; her sons are, in fact, in the mountains fighting on the side of the resistance. It is her role as mother to these men that provokes such rage from Belaid. When Khedidja’s daughter comes to her mother’s aid, she confronts Belaid, saying to him “Pourquoi n’irais-tu pas te mesurer avec un de mes frères au lieu de t’acharner sur des vieillards et des femmes sans défense vendu!” (6.7). This only serves to escalate the situation. Yet it seems that mentioning the brothers is more infuriating to Belaid than being called *un vendu*, because his physical attack on the daughter on the following page comes with this verbal threat “Tu penses me faire peur avec tes frères! Qu’ils viennent je les abattrai avec joie!” (6.5). But Belaid never gets to fight Khedidja’s sons, as the reader soon learns that Allel is wounded (and never returns to the village in the narrative) and Djaffar died in combat (9). They sacrifice everything in the name of independence, while Belaid helps the French troops and harasses helpless villagers.

This scene presents the possibility of various perspectives on the war, which reflects a historical reality. The *harki* figure is a traitor by all Algerian accounts in this scene: a random villager in the breadline thinks to himself that "Ton châtiment viendra traître!" (5.3) as he watches Belaid, the captions refer to Belaid as "traître" on multiple occasions (6), and the daughter calls him "vendu" to his face (6.7) before addressing him as "sale ordure" (6.6). What is most damning about his helping the French troops (not the helping itself or even his attempts to ingratiate himself to the captain) is that this character's dialogue shows that he subscribes to their position on the war.

While the book depicts Belaid as an objectively bad guy, the depiction of his wife, Mahdjouba, is more complicated, even nuanced when closely examined. In the scene that introduces Mahdjouba, a young Algerian soldier (who is later identified as Nacer) approaches her to inquire about the *harki* incident (8-9). She asks him to return the next day when she will have information for him (10-11), but this is a setup that ultimately will result in his death. Mahdjouba is introduced in a caption that reads "Une semaine s'écoula… par une douce matinée ensoleillée, une femme, Mahdjouba, épouse de Belaid le harki était occupée, comme les autres villageois à ramasser les olives" (8.1). Unlike the caption providing Belaid's introduction that immediately established him as separate from the villagers in his role helping the French, Mahdjouba is working "comme les autres villageois". Furthermore, when Nacer happens upon her and begins inquiring about Khedidja and her daughter, he mistakenly identifies her as friend not foe, a mistake which likely could not happen in Belaid's case due to his demeanor. The young man is polite, calling her "madame" (9.3), "ma tante" (10.1), and "bonne femme" (11.2). She is never referred to as a *harki*, but captions refer to her as "Mahdjouba, épouse de Belaid le harki" (8.1) and "la femme de Belaid, le harki" (10.3); the repetition seems unnecessary since

Belaid should be fresh in the reader's mind from his actions in the previous scene (even the previous page), since he is a topic of discussion in this scene, and since he is the only character in the book who is referred to as a *harki*. Throughout her conversation with the young Algerian soldier, Mahdjouba keeps up the appearance of being just another villager, not the wife of the man that has made himself an enemy of the local resistance fighters. She plans to meet the young man the next day, although he does not know that he is being set up by Mahdjouba who tells her husband of the encounter, which Belaid then shares with the French captain. The captain, in conversation with Belaid, calls Mahdjouba "ta 'Fatima'" (10.4); this is a reminder that although she seems like other villagers, she and her husband are still seen as other by the French.

Even though Mahdjouba is responsible for the what will happen to the young man, he ultimately dies at the hand of the French soldiers who use his body in a show of power (see analysis above). She is presented as more sympathetic than her husband because she did not seek out the situation, but merely reacted to the position she was put in by being married to him. Belaid represents the *harki* figure as the FLN would have wanted them represented, a traitor and enemy of Algeria, whereas Mahdjouba represents a nuanced understanding of the complex reasons—circumstance, safety, food, etc.—why an Algerian would side with France.[109]

Nevertheless, husband and wife suffer the same consequences for their actions as traitors, as perceived by the local Algerian soldiers who later ambush and kill Belaid and Mahdjouba in their home (this scene is analyzed at length below). As seen in Figure 14, in the *harki*'s final scene, Belaid is again referred to as "vendu" and "traître" (22-23), while Mahdjouba is treated to more gendered insults, such as "cette vieille corneille" (24.1), "vieille sorcière" (24.3), and "cette

[109] See Jennifer Howell for more on the *harki* figure ("Popularizing historical taboos, transmitting postmemory: the French-Algerian War in the bande dessinée" and "Illustrating Independence").

chienne" (24.5), all of which appear as dialogue rather than in captions.[110] Furthermore, the Algerian soldiers' dialogue makes clear for the reader and the *harkis* why they are being punished. Belaid's executioner, Si Mourad, declares: "L'heure a sonné pour toi. Tu vas payer tous les méfaits que tu as commis!" (23.1) and "Tu as trahi ton pays. *Ta place n'est plus parmi-nous!*" (23.2, my emphasis). Mahdjouba's executioner, Si Brahim, similarly explains her crimes and punishment, saying "Tu as livré un des nôtres aux français. Tu dois payer!" (24.2) and "Le village a assez souffert de vos traîtrises. *Les vendus n'ont pas de place parmi nous*" (24.4, my emphasis). Just as there is no place for *harkis* in this village, independent Algeria was no place for *harkis* under FLN rule. Depicting *harki* figures—not to mention nuanced *harki* figures—sets this book apart from its contemporaries in this genre.

[110] Captions refer to Belaid as "traître" (22, 23) whereas "vendu" (22) appears in a speech balloon.

Figure 14: The two *harki* characters meet their fate (*Le village oublié* 23).

Continuing the examination of the various players in this war, let us now shift focus to the depiction of the combat itself as well as the characters fighting on each side. Combat—and combat-related activities like strategizing, preparing, and mobilizing—occupies much of the book. Combat is rendered as images of fire, blasts, and explosions, often with onomatopoeia.[111] Automatic weapons ring out as "TAC TAC TAC" or "RATATA TATA TATA" and dynamite causes a tremendous explosion whose smoke and onomatopoeic "BRAAM…" fill the sky (37.1). The effect of gunfire or explosion is essentially the same: bodies are thrown through the air or knocked down, but the human form remains intact without blood or gore. The characters who navigate this explosive landscape include the French troops, led by the Captain (identifiable by his light-colored hair) and his Sergeant, both of whom remain nameless, as well as the Algerian troops, led by Si Haoues, and comprised of many named fighters with distinct appearances and roles—e.g. Allel, Djaffar, Nacer, Mourad, Brahim, Fouad, Maâmar, and Othman. Looking at the textual elements—captions, speech balloons, thought balloons, onomatopoeia—alongside the illustrations, this section examines the straightforward naming conventions when referring to French troops as opposed to the variety of terms used for their Algerian counterparts to examine how the book depicts heroism, keeping in mind the generic conventions of sacrifice, bravery, and individual heroes. How is each side depicted? How does the book depict characters as they talk to and talk about one another? What is the role of captions in this depiction? What is revealed in the characters' dialogue?

The book's first depiction of combat sets the tone for the overall characterization of both sides. Let us return to Si Nacer's story—after his interaction with Mahdjouba on pages 8-10 (see

[111] The exceptions are when Mourad and Brahim use knives to silently slit the throats of two soldiers in the fortin (21) before stabbing Belaid and Mahdjouba to death (23-24).

analysis directly above) but before his body is displayed in town on pages 16-17 (see analysis in Part 1)—to see how the book introduces combat.[112] The episode in question (pages 11-15) opens with Si Nacer, alone, at the *rendez-vous* point as he waits for Mahdjouba, who the reader knows has already set him up. Although he is unaware of the impending ambush, he is a good soldier who is always prepared, which is conveyed through is thought balloon "Mais restons sur nos gardes, on ne sait jamais" (11.3). At least four French soldiers are ready to ambush Si Nacer, and they are led by the captain who orders "Surtout ne tirez sous aucun prétexte. Je le veux vivant. Je veux le voir mourir à petit feu. Je le trainerais dans la boue à titre d'exemple et d'avertissement" (11.5). A French soldier steps on a stick and gives away their position, then another goes against the captain's orders, yelling "Je l'ai eu, mon capitaine!" (12.3) as he opens fire. The onomatopoeia TAC TAC TAC TAC TAC shows the rapid fire directed at Si Nacer, who falls to the ground. Visibly irritated, the captain demands to know who went against his orders so blatantly, yelling "Quel est l'imbécile qui a tiré celui-là? Il me le payera cher!" (12.4). As seen in Figure 15, despite being wounded and losing consciousness, the young *djoundi* will not go down without a fight, as he returns fire and verbal insult, saying "Vous m'aurez peut-être bande de chacals, mais vous payerez le prix!" (13.1). The bumbling French soldiers fall comically into the thorny underbrush, exclaiming "Ouille! Aie! Aou!" (13.2). Outnumbered and wounded, the *djoundi* nonetheless escapes through the same treacherous vegetation that injured the soldiers, and they are unable to track him after nightfall.[113] The captain's admonishment of his men—"Bande d'incapables il a réussi à filer sous vos yeux!" (13.5)—closes that page. The scene

[112] In this scene, Si Nacer is not named. It is not until after his death that his name is revealed, and this is in conversation between soldiers in his unit (page 18). For ease of reading, I use his name here.

[113] Masmoudi's signature appears in the frame depicting the *djoundi*'s escape (13.3).

continues the next morning, with at least ten French soldiers and two dogs tracking the lone Algerian soldier. They find his body near a stream, leaving the reader to wonder what Si Nacer endured that night before collapsing in this spot. The *djoundi* fought and died bravely, and he is eulogized in a caption reading "Une grande paix se lisait sur son visage calme et serein. Il a offert sans regret sur l'autel de la patrie ce qu'il possédait de plus précieux: sa vie" (15.2). The lone soldier who sacrifices his life in combat is a generic convention, and the role here is filled by Si Nacer. Also, in keeping with the Algerian War Genre, sacrifice is secular.[114] Si Nacer gave his life for Algeria, but the question of martyrdom is not bridged here. Rather, this character exemplifies qualities inherent to the Algerian soldier, such as bravery and sacrifice. This episode introduces combat, which dominates the second half of the book, and gives the reader an idea of what to expect from soldiers on both sides. The French soldiers continue to outnumber and outgun their Algerian counterparts, and their leader continues his treatment of his own men as well as his ruthless treatment of the other side.

[114] As Allen Douglas and Fedwa Malti-Douglas have conceived of self-sacrifice in Algerian comics, sacrifice is secular, martyrdom is rare, and the dead bear a message of sacrifice ("The Algerian Strip and Bilingual Politics" 72-73).

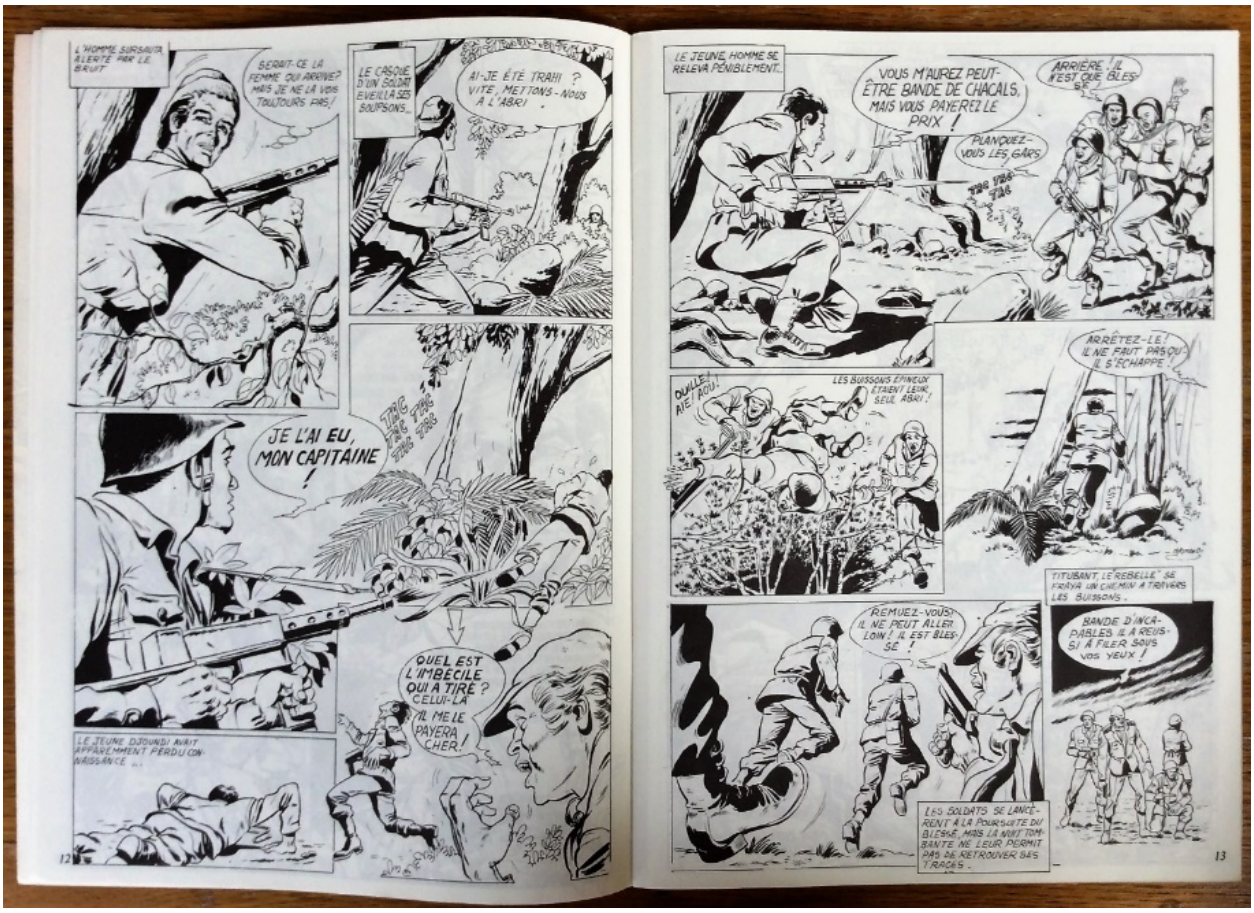

Figure 15: The battle between the young *djoundi* and the French soldiers begins (*Le village oublié* 12-13).

When the other Algerian soldiers are introduced in the book, they appear as a group, up in the mountains where they make their plan to retrieve the body of Si Nacer, whom they call "notre frère" (19.2). The following scene shows the dynamics among the Algerian soldiers, led by Si Haoues. The Algerian plan hinges on detonating the explosives on the Pont Sidi-Rached at the exact moment the French cross the bridge; waiting for Si Mourad and his team to arrive with the French convoy close behind is dramatized over several pages. When Si Mourad is hit by enemy gunfire as he reaches the bridge, the Algerian soldiers all respond heroically, stoically, and selflessly. An unnamed soldier risks his own safety to help Mourad, and he is acknowledged in the caption which reads "Bravant les balles le vaillant djoundi aida son compagnon blessé"

(35.1). Mourad's last words are addressed to this *djoundi*—"Tu n'aurais pas dû revenir sur tes pas… pour me… secourir… il faut penser à la réussite de notre mission…" (35.1). Mourad's sentiments are shared by Haoues who must make the difficult decision to save the mission by sacrificing his men, saying "Nous ne pouvons venir à leur aide. Notre objectif consiste à faire sauter le pont quand la moitié des soldats franchira le pont" (35.2). Mourad and the brave *djoundi* do not make it across the bridge, and they are memorialized by the caption that accompanies their demise: "Les lourdes véhicules militaires passèrent sur les corps des deux glorieux martyrs…" (35.5). Through all this, his men hold their fire until Si Haoues gives the signal: "C'est le moment! Attention… FEU!" (36.3); the spiked speech balloon and big block lettering for the word "feu" convey emotion and volume. The shape of the speech balloon reflects that of the explosion that shakes the ground and blasts trucks into the air, but the plan is just getting started. Si Haoues signals his men again, shouting "En avant mes frères! Allah ou akbar!" (37.2) as the remaining French vehicles are surrounded by the various teams poised on the bluff and behind rocks. Again, the speech balloon and bold lettering convey emotion, and his words appear almost to shoot from his weapon, with words and fire extending into the adjacent frame (37). Opposite this page, the French captain barks at his men "Grouillez-vous bande d'incapables!" (36.2), putting this leader in stark opposition to his Algerian counterpart.[115] Like Si Haoues, "le valeureux" Si Othman leads his team (ALFA II) with the rally cry "Notre tour est venu d'entrer en action mes frères! Allah ou akbar! En avant!" (40.1). For both Algerian leaders, their call to arms includes the fraternal address accompanied by the transliterated Arabic phrase "God is the greatest." It seems that they are fighting for their brotherhood, nation, and religion.

[115] This is the second time the French captain has called his men *bande d'incapables* (12, 36); elsewhere he addresses his men with terms like *imbicile* (12) and *idiote* (44).

Representing their struggle in religious terms is one way in which this album parrots the FLN's discourse. Islamic ideology, here, is part of the genre as imposed by the politics of the time of the album's creation, when the FLN's deployment of the idea of a war for Islam rose from a minority position in light of the Iranian revolution.[116]

The Algerian fighters are depicted through their bravery and brotherhood, and their relationships to one another reflect these characteristics, particularly in how they speak to one another with their fraternal address and the repeated use of the Arabic honorific "Si" before their names—both in dialogue and in captions. Let us now examine how the Algerian side is referred to by characters outside of their group as well as how they are referenced in captions. While the French forces are typically described using neutral terms such as "les soldats" or "les français" in captions or in speech balloons coming from Algerian soldiers—with the occasional description or jab, e.g. "l'armée ennemie" (in a caption, 38.1-2) or "bande de chacals" (said by Si Nacer, 13.1)[117]—the terms used to describe the Algerian forces are more complicated. The terms *djounoud*, *fellagas*, and *moudjahidine* all appear within the text to refer to those fighting on the side of the Algerian resistance, but these terms are not synonyms nor are they used as such in the text. Dictionary definitions help clarify the differences in these terms' meaning: in standard Arabic, *djounoud*, *fellagas*, and *moudjahidine* translate to soldiers, bandits, and freedom fighters,

[116] The FLN's deployment of "a re-moralizing 'war for Islam'" for self-legitimization remained a minority position through the 1960s until the Iranian revolution of the late 1970s (*A History of Algeria* McDougall 262).

[117] Other examples of the neutral terms in captions include a description of the battle "entre les moudjahidine et les soldats" (43, my emphasis) and in dialogue such as by Si Mourad, saying "Fais-vite! Les soldats doivent être maintenant alertes par les coups de feu." (25.2, my emphasis) and "Courez droit vers le pont. Les français ne vont pas tarder à se montrer." (25.3, my emphasis). Another example of a descriptive jab is when an unnamed Algerian soldier says "Ces naïfs auront une belle surprise quand ils traverseront le pont" (29, my emphasis).

respectively[118]; in French, *fellagas* and *moudjahidine* both connote soldiers fighting for independence.[119] In Masmoudi's album, the most-used term of these three is *djounoud* (occurring 16 times), which appears only in captions and is used in the singular (*djoundi*) as well as its plural form; it seems to be the book's neutral option for referring to Algerian soldiers.

The context of the Algerian War adds meaning to these terms, considering that *moudjahidine* was the FLN's preferred term for fighters on the Algerian side; this term is reflected in the title of the party's newspaper, *El Moudjahid*, which ran during and after the war. *Moudjahid* shares a root with *jihad* (*jihād*) meaning "fight, battle; jihad, holy war (against the infidels, as a religious duty" (*Hans Wehr* 169). Despite the FLN's preference for this term, *moudjahidine* appears sparingly in the book. It is used four times total—fewer than the other terms—and only in the plural form. *Moudjahidine* seems to serve a distinct purpose in captions, where it helps situate the action and define the groups involved. After initially establishing the main players in the book as "l'armée ennemie" and "les vaillants moudjahidine" (caption 3.2), two other captions use the term as follows: "Au sommet de la crête, des moudjahidine et à leur

[118] The Arabic definitions for *djoundi*, *fellaga*, and *moudjahid* are taken from the *Hans Wehr Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* and are summarized here. Djoundi (جندي singular, جنود plural; transliterated as jundī singular and junūd plural) means "soldier; private" and comes from the root (جند) meaning "to draft, conscript, enlist, recruit" (*Hans Wehr* 166). Fellaga (فلاق singular, فلاقة plural; transliterated as fallāq singular and fallāqā plural) means "bandit, highwayman, highway robber" and comes from the root (فلق) meaning "to split, cleave, rive, sunder, tear asunder" (*Hans Wehr* 851). Moudjahid (مُجاهِد singular, مُجاهِدون plural; transliterated as mujāhid singular and mujāhidūn plural) means "fighter, freedom fighter; warrior; sergeant" and comes from the root (جهد) meaning "to endeavor, strive; to fight" and "to wage holy war against the infidels" (*Hans Wehr* 168-169). Moudjahid shares a root with jihad (jihād) meaning "fight, battle; jihad, holy war (against the infidels, as a religious duty" (*Hans Wehr* 169).

[119] *Le Micro Robert* (2006) defines fellag(h)a as "Nom donné par les Français aux combattants partisans de l'Algérie indépendante (1956-1962)" (548) and moudjahid as "Combattant de certains mouvements de libération nationale du monde musulman (Afghanistan, Algérie)" (859). Djounoud does not appear in this prominent French dictionary.

tête le commandant Si Haoues guettaient l'apparition du commando et leurs poursuivants" (30.1) and "Pendant ce temps au pied de la montagne la bataille faisait rage entre les moudjahidine et les soldats…" (43.2). The exception to its usage in captions is in a speech balloon by Belaid who exclaims "Mahjouba lève-toi! Les moudjahidine!" (23.2) when their home is invaded; his unique usage of the term reflects his unique position between the two sides but not part of either. These captions signal a scene change and summarize the action of multiple military units, which suggests that *moudjahidine* is best used for clarification and to signify the Algerian side, collectively, in this text.

Fellagas, on the other hand, is used only in dialogue, only in the plural (although sometimes shortened to *fells*), and only by Belaid or the French soldiers as a pejorative term. It is often paired with the adjective *maudit*, as introduced by Belaid, who defines "ces maudits fellagas" with the "hors-la-loi" (4.4). The use of *fellagas* (or *fells*) by the French soldiers increases with the intensity of combat. Consider the following five instances of the term. The captain announces "Les fellagas attaquent! Ne les laissez pas s'échapper cette fois!" (26.2) when he realizes that something is afoot. Similarly, when ALFA II makes a surprise attack back at the military camp, a soldier exclaims "Arrière! Planquez-vous! Les fells nous attaquent!" (41.1). Yet another soldier shouts "Ah! Ces maudits fells nous ont bien eus! Ils nous avaient préparé un piège! Mais ils ne s'en tireraient pas ainsi! Faites-moi fauter ces bandits sergent!" (43.2) as he realizes that the bridge explosion was planned and that they have been tricked. The use of the adjective "maudits" continues in the captain's exclamations upon realizing the extent of coordinated attack: "Malédiction! Ces maudits fellagas nous ont roulés. Une troupe a dû attaquer le camp tandis que nous poursuivions les fuyards" (43.4) and "Malédiction! Ces maudits fellagas nous ont bien eus. Mais je vous garantis que tout n'est pas terminé sergent!" (44.4). Finally,

"maudits fellagas" turns into "maudit village" when the captain gives the fatal order: "Je veux voir ce maudit village complètement rasé!" (45.1). The pejorative use of *fellagas* by the French in this work is notable in its taking of a known term and escalating its violent meaning to actual physical violence.

In sum, the differences in meaning between *djounoud*, *moudjahidine*, and *fellagas* gain new meaning and functions per their usage in the text. This points the multiplicity of positions and perspectives on the war on the Algerian side, as does the presence of the *harkis*, who are Algerian but become othered during the war. The generic conventions of heroism and self-sacrifice remain secular in this work regarding individual heroes, while the generic convention of invoking Allah as a call to arms is far from secular. The tension between the secular and the religious is not uncommon in the genre, as the political culture of independent Algeria was defined by a heavily politicized and changing deployment of Islam that was used to sanction the regime's legitimacy.[120] Combat and heroism are gendered and reserved for men, which is apparent visually but also in that *djounoud*, *moudjahidine*, and *fellagas* never appear in their feminine forms in the album.

On Women and Violence

If the presence of heroic male protagonists is a notable generic convention for Algerian War comics, the convention for women can best be described as absence. Rare examples of comics with female characters are Mansour Amouri's *Sur les sentiers escarpés* (ENAL 1983), Brahim Guerroui's "Aube brumeuse" in *Les enfants de la liberté* (ENAL 1986), and Ahmed

[120] Per McDougall, the political culture of independent Algeria is inherited from the PPA before the war then the FLN during the war with superficial doctrines of national community as Islamic and Arab (*A History of Algeria* 261).

Hebrih and Mahfoud Aïder's *Échec aux léopards* (ENAL 1986).[121] Their respective female characters are a resistance fighter in an otherwise all-male unit, a mother worrying about losing her son in combat, and a woman who transports a weapon concealed in her *haïk*; all are minor characters who support the war effort. Masmoudi's *Le village oublié* (ENAL 1983) stands out from this small group of texts through the presence of multiple female characters.

I am analyzing the representation of women in Masmoudi's *Le village oublié* because their mere presence is notable for a comic in the genre but furthermore because of how they are represented in the text. From the cover art to the epilogue, women appear throughout *Le village oublié*. Yet as individual characters, their presence is contained to certain scenes that punctuate the plotline. I argue that the women are united in their representation in that all are met with violence committed by men and due to the actions of other men in their lives. Representing violence in a war comic certainly creates verisimilitude. But Masmoudi's album refrains from repeating the centuries-old colonial weapons of conquest and rape or the systematic torture for which this war is infamously known.[122] In what follows, I examine the scenes with Khedidja and her daughter, with Mahdjouba, and with the various female villagers who are victims of the massacre, paying close attention to how and why violence is depicted and to what effect.

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[121] Douglas and Malti-Douglas (74-75) and Howell ("Popularizing historical taboos, transmitting postmemory: the French-Algerian War in the bande dessinée" 36-37) also note the absence of women in war comics of this era; both point to Amouri's *Les sentiers escarpés* as an exception, while Howell also identifies Guerroui's *Les enfants de la liberté* as such. *Échec aux leopards* and *Le village oublié* are my contributions to this list, although it should be noted that Howell analyzes other elements of *Le village oublié* but fails to acknowledge Khedidja and her daughter's support of the war effort, which effects the plotline more than the depiction of the worried mother in Guerroui's text.

[122] Fanon's *Le damnes de la terre (1961): Guerre coloniale et troubles mentaux*, Série A provides wartime accounts of torture and rape of Algerian women, as recounted by men (244-258). Amrane-Minne's *Des femmes dans la guerre d'Algérie* (1994) provides first-person accounts from Algerian women who experienced torture during the war.

Belaid's attack on Khedidja and her daughter sets the pattern of violence against women. The verbal aspect of the attack is examined above, and now let us examine the physical attack. The attack takes place over the course of 3 pages (5-7) or 16 panels, and the series of retaliatory acts and escalating violence prefigures the plot of the remainder of the book (see Figure 16). The initial attack on the old woman is unprovoked and comes on suddenly. As analyzed above, Khedidja is targeted by the *harki* because her sons are fighting on the side of the resistance. In first panel depicting both aggressor and victim, Belaid grabs Khedidja's shoulder while verbally assaulting her "Tu as donc faim, vieille folle! Tes enfants du djebel t'ont-ils donc oublié?" (5.4). The next image shows her falling in the foreground as he laughs in the background (5.5). In both panels, the bold lettering and spiked tail of his speech balloons emphasize his aggression, as does the caption describing the action—"Il poussa brutalement la pauvre femme"—and the movement lines by his raised hand (5.4). The last image on the page shows Khedidja starting to get up with the help of her daughter, giving the reader false hope that perhaps this is the end of the violent scene.

Figure 16: Belaid continues to attack Khedidja and her daughter (*Le village oublié* 6-7).

However, the violence not only continues but intensifies after the page is turned, where each tier (three per page) contains a new development in the action. The following conversation between Belaid and the captain appears across the top tier:

—"Mon capitaine, c'est Khedidja, la mère de Allel et Djaffar qui sont montés au djebel. Si vous voulez m'écouter, on doit brûler sa maison et abattre ses deux chèvres. Ça fera réfléchir les autres!" (6.1)

—"Un peu de patience Belaid! Il faut me les surveiller de près et m'informer de leurs moindres faits et gestes." (6.2)

—"Comme vous voudrez, mon capitaine." (6.3)

Denied the opportunity to destroy Khedidja's home and livestock, Belaid nevertheless takes action in the moment. The middle tier shows Belaid returning to the two women then striking the daughter across the face (6.4-6.5); and the bottom tier depicts the young woman's attempt to fight back (6.6-6.8).

As the physical attacks intensify, their depiction changes, especially in regard to the use of emanata, here, as motion lines.[123] When the mother is pushed to the ground and the daughter is slapped across the face, it is Belaid's raised hand and motion lines that indicate physical contact (5.5, 6.5). The reader is spared the image of the physical contact, especially considering that, in terms of framing, these two panels use a medium long shot and medium close-up, respectively. When the daughter fights back, she is depicted lunging at him and putting her hands on his face, framed in a medium long shot (6.7). It is a close-up that shows her nails clawing at Belaid's face, which is distorted in pain and seen from her point of view (6.8). The lack of borders on these frames—combined with the motion lines surrounding her hair and body—present her as a force cannot be contained. Yet when Belaid "s'acharna sur la jeune femme à coups de poings, sans pitié" (7.1), what is described in the caption is also rendered for the reader to see. His closed fist—accompanied by motion lines indicating tremendous force—makes contact with her face as she falls back; framed in a long shot, her face is drawn too small for the reader to make out any details. The final image in this scene, framed in an extreme long shot, shows Belaid kicking the young woman who is down on the ground at this point (7.4).

Whether through framing or emanata, the reader is distanced from the violence against women in the individual panels that make up this scene. The pacing of the scene is up to the

[123] Emanata is a comics term used to describe symbolic icons such as motion lines to indicate speed or beads of sweat to show a character's emotional state.

reader, but the violence does not stop because the scene fades out with Belaid still attacking the women. The mother never gets up, and the daughter ends up on the ground with her. In addition to not knowing how this scene ends, the reader never knows the fate of Khedidja and her daughter, as this is their only appearance in the book. One woman is voiceless, the other is nameless, and their fate is unknown, thus adding a layer of textual violence to their presence in the book.

Mahdjouba is introduced on the page after the scene with Khedidja and her daughter. The three women do not interact in the diegesis of the book, but their stories are intertwined. Their back-to-back scenes mean that they share a leaf in the book: Khedidja's scene ends on the recto, and Mahdjouba's scene begins on the verso. Mahdjouba appears in two scenes in the book, with the first leading to the violence of the second. She is characterized through vulnerability and violence. In her first scene she is humanized then she is dehumanized in the second.

The first image in this scene depicts Mahdjouba crouched and gathering olives as a man watches her from behind a tree (see Figure 17); her back is to the reader and to the man who leers forward with his hand on his gun (8.1). The next panel changes the point of view so that she is facing the reader who, like the mysterious man, is watching her; the man is not visible from this angle, which adds suspense to the situation (8.2). The next two panels depict only the man whose mouth is sneering and whose hand remains on his automatic rifle, which is clearly an intimidation tactic as the shoulder strap makes it redundant to keep his hand on it (8.3-8.4); the caption confirms what the reader suspects, that she is unaware of his presence "Elle n'avait même pas remarquer [sic] la présence du jeune homme qui la regardait depuis un moment, cherchant à attirer son attention" (8.3). When the reader finishes this page, the predatory man's identity remains unknown, just as his presence remains unknown to Mahdjouba. Both of which

will be quickly revealed on the top of the next page. Despite the man's appeasement of "N'ayez aucune crainte", Mahdjouba's surprise upon seeing him is indicated by the motion lines as she quickly stands and by her exclamation of "Qu'est-ce que!" (9.1). As he explains that he was sent by Khedidja's son to gather information about the *harki* who hurt Khedidja and her daughter, Mahdjouba realizes the dangerous position she is in because of her husband (9.2). When he speaks of avenging the women's suffering, "Le regard dur du djoundi effraya la femme" (9.5); his eyes appear in an extreme close-up, putting the reader in Mahdjouba's point of view, thus forcing the reader to identify with her position, if only for a moment.

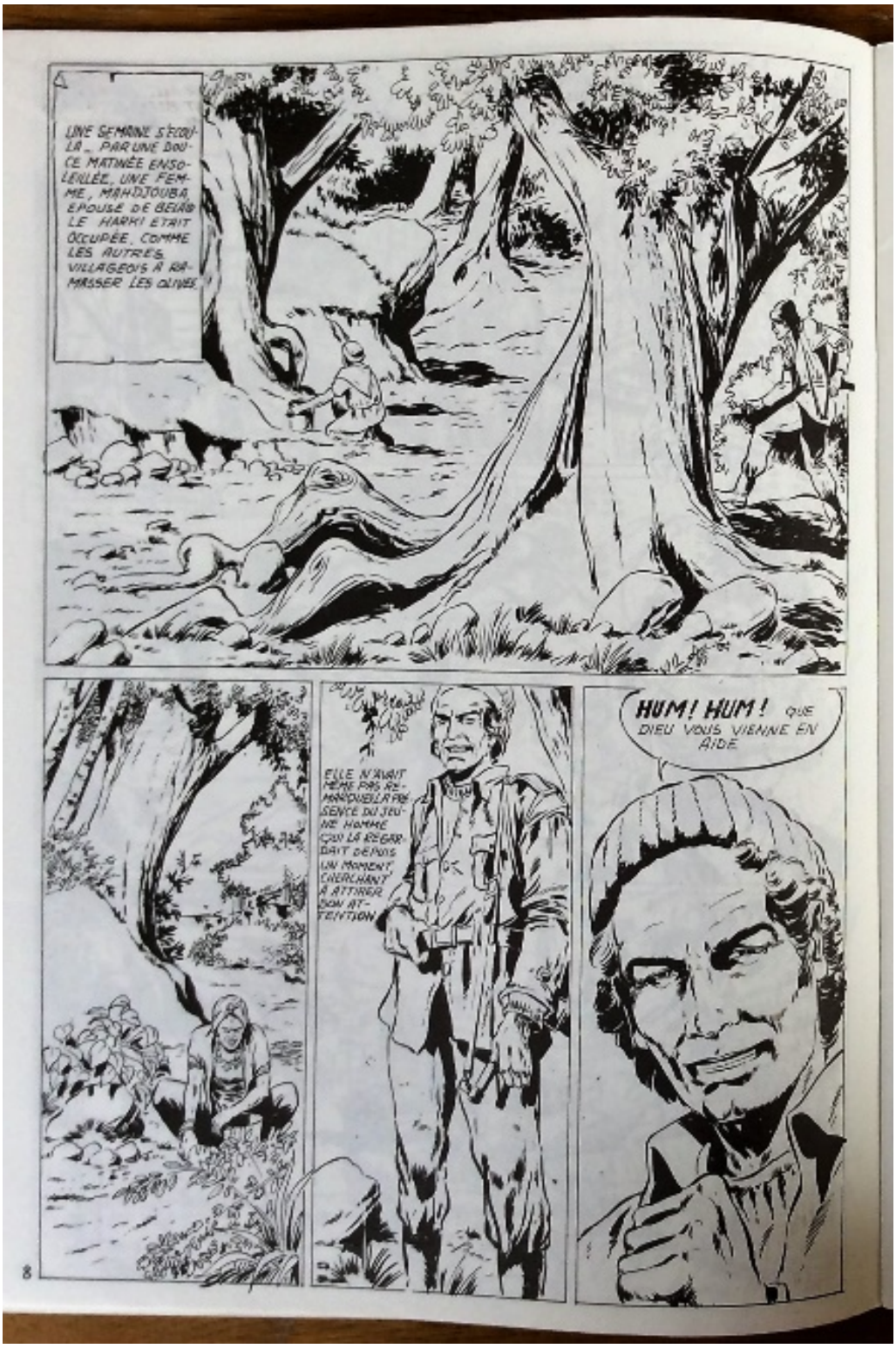

Figure 17: Mahdjouba works alone, unaware of the young man who watches her (*Le village oublié* 8).

The threats shift yet again on the following page when Mahdjouba tells the young man to meet her the next day. The young man worries for her safety, asking "N'est-ce très dangereux pour vous ma tante?" (10.1), clearly unaware of her plan to set him up. A new threat is introduced when Belaid tells the French captain of his wife's encounter, and the captain threatens them both that if her potential information does not produce a desired outcome, saying to Belaid "Je te traiterais toi et ton épouse de la même manière que tu as traité cette vieille femme et sa fille" (10.4). The young man shows up the next day—thus removing the captain's threat—and now he is the one being watched without his knowledge, just as he watched Mahdjouba previously (11).

The syntagmatic positioning of this scene should be considered when examining this character. Because this scene follows the one in which Khedidja is attacked, the threat of violence against women and the depravity of Belaid's character are fresh in the mind of the reader. When the book shows Mahdjouba alone among the olive trees, her vulnerability is foregrounded. Combined with the seemingly predatory gaze of the man behind the tree, the reader anticipates a violent moment that does not come to fruition. When Mahdjouba betrays the young man, the reader might sympathize with the difficulty of her decision or at least blame her husband for putting her in danger. She is a humanized, because feminized, traitor to the revolution.[124]

The second and final scene in which we see Mahdjouba is her death, which is discussed above (see Figure 18 below). In addition to calling her a *vendu* (24.4), she is also called *cette vieille corneille* (24.1), *vieille sorcière* (24.3), and *cette chienne* (24.5) by the Algerian soldiers; the latter three terms do the work of dehumanizing her. Dehumanizing terms were not used for

[124] See Moore for more on a humanized because feminized violence during the war.

Belaid. Her death is more dramatic than her husband's and also more drawn out. Whereas one plate (page) contains the Algerian soldiers entering the home and killing Belaid all in the course of three panels, it is another plate and four frames before Mahdjouba is killed. Furthermore, her death is dramatized by the trauma she experiences as a witness to her husband's murder; she screams and asks for pity for her husband before he is stabbed in front of her, swiftly (*net*), almost falling onto her. The reader must turn the page to learn of Mahdjouba's fate. Once Si Mourad kills Belaid, Si Brahim confronts Mahdjouba. Brahim looms over her as Mourad's order to silence her floats in above Brahim; her screams get louder, as indicated by the bold lettering and shape of her speech balloon (24.1). Brahim gives reasons why she must die, in addition to silencing her, as he grabs her hair and Mourad wields his knife in her face; she pleads with them for her life, saying everything is Belaid's fault (24.2). Using her own hair as leverage is particularly cruel, and the caption "Brahim l'agrippa par les cheveux…" hovers above the frame ominously. It is obvious that she will not receive the mercy she has been begging for when Brahim says "Maintenant tu crains la mort vieille sorcière!" (24.3). The next frame is her last: still holding her by her hair, Brahim stabs her in her chest, saying to her "Le village a assez souffert de vos traîtrises. Les vendus n'ont pas de place parmi nous" (24.4). Whereas Belaid was stabbed in the back, Mahdjouba was stabbed in the chest, meaning that she saw everything. By switching from the second person singular ("tu crains" 24.3) to the second person plural ("vos traîtrises" 24.4) in just one frame, Brahim's dialogue shows that Belaid is implicated in all of her

crimes—an implication that may extend to all *harkis*.[125] She is a victim because of her husband.

By humanizing her in the olive scene, Mahdjouba's dehumanizing and gendered death seems worse than that of her husband, who was ultimately more culpable. Lastly, an act of textual violence also marks her death. When the Algerian soldiers enter Belaid and Mahdjouba's home, Belaid yells out to his wife to alert her to the danger: "*Mahjouba* lève-toi! Les moudjahidine!" (23.2, my emphasis). Here her name is spelled Mahjouba, which is a different spelling than all other instances of her name: Mahdjouba. Because the book itself is hand-lettered, this is an error but not a typographical error. Even if unintentional, this slip of pen (*lapsus calami*) reflects her status in the work as one who is defined and shaped by the men around her.

[125] When the Algerian fighters are establishing their plan, Si Haoues assures Allel that he is in no way responsible for the death of Si Nacer (who was set up by Mahdjouba) saying "Le harki Belaid et sa famille sont les seuls responsables. Ils doivent payer. Il est temps de mettre fin à leurs agissements" (19.1). Although Belaid is the only guilty party named by Haoues, Mahdjouba's culpability is included with her husband's; furthermore, the use of the plural possessive adjective in 'leurs agissements' leaves open the possibility that Mahdjouba and her husband are both guilty of more than what the reader has witnessed.

Figure 18: Mahdjouba is killed in her home (*Le village oublié* 24).

After Mahdjouba's death, it is another twenty pages before another woman appears on the page. However, when women return to the narrative, they are—of course—met with violence. The theme of violence against women returns with a vengeance at the end of the book. Women and children are not spared in the French retaliation. In fact, the book seems to highlight their suffering. At the end of the book, the violence's representation changes. The first three women—Khedidja, her daughter, and Mahdjouba—are attacked as individuals by another individual. The violence at the end of the book is the mass destruction that rains down on the village at the hands of the French troops, mainly the captain. Women appear prominently in the last five pages of the book, four of which are paginated and one of which is the epilogue. In broad strokes, the final pages of the book show the French captain's decision to destroy the village (44-45), the destruction as it is happening (46), and the aftermath (47, epilogue).

Before the culminating violence that destroys the village and ends the book, there is a conversation between the French captain and his sergeant about the women—as well as the children—in the village, but women are not visually displayed on this page, only verbally via speech balloons as dialogue. The captain's orders to the sergeant are that: "Tout l'artillerie en position de tir sur le village. Ces misérables doivent se réjouir du succès de l'opération de leur héros. Ils payeront à leur place!" (44.5). As opposed to the sneering, almost smiling captain, the sergeant's face shows his dismay, which is reflected in his words: "Mais mon capitaine… Il y a des femmes et des enfants! On leur laisse le temps d'évacuer les lieux?..." (44.5). But this is the end of the sergeant's protest. Their conversation continues on the opposite page, and the sergeant quickly falls in line. Their conversation makes explicit that female villagers will suffer as a result of their male heroes' actions.

The first potential victim of the French soldier's bombardment of the village is,

unsurprisingly, a woman. She is unnamed and this is her first and only appearance in the book. Moving through this page, the reader sees the captain prepare his soldiers to fire on the village, then several frames that show them firing, then finally in the last frame the woman who is depicted with beams and debris falling around her (45.9). She is depicted with rocks just inches above her head, their movement lines indicating speed and direction. This will surely result in a fatal blow to the head, but the reader is spared this gruesome scene.

What awaits the reader when they turn the page is a depiction of the horror of the bombardment as it is happening (see Figure 19). Masmoudi employs a montage panel, which has the effect of simultaneously representing the experience of many villagers during the bombardment on one page, even though the individual scenes do not share the same spatial relationship in the diegesis. Five unnamed women appear on this page; they are both individual in their separate frames but a cohesive unit of victims. Starting on the top left corner of the page and moving clockwise through the encrusted images, the action is as follows: a woman is guided by a man away from a building that is exploding in the background, a woman runs from a house holding a swaddled baby while a man is blown from the house in an explosion, a woman with a child pulling at her skirt stands in a pile of debris with her head in her hands looking at the body of a man buried under beams, and a family runs out of a doorway with an explosion overhead and the woman helps a child as the man carries a baby. The center image, a splash panel, shows a close-up of a woman in agony in the arms of a man. The reader is a witness to the atrocities of the war as it affects women, children, and families. Women appear alongside characters who the reader can assume to be their family members as their homes are destroyed, thus using *tressage* to braid the imagery of homes throughout the album and connecting this scene and its victims back to the old man's memories in the opening scene.

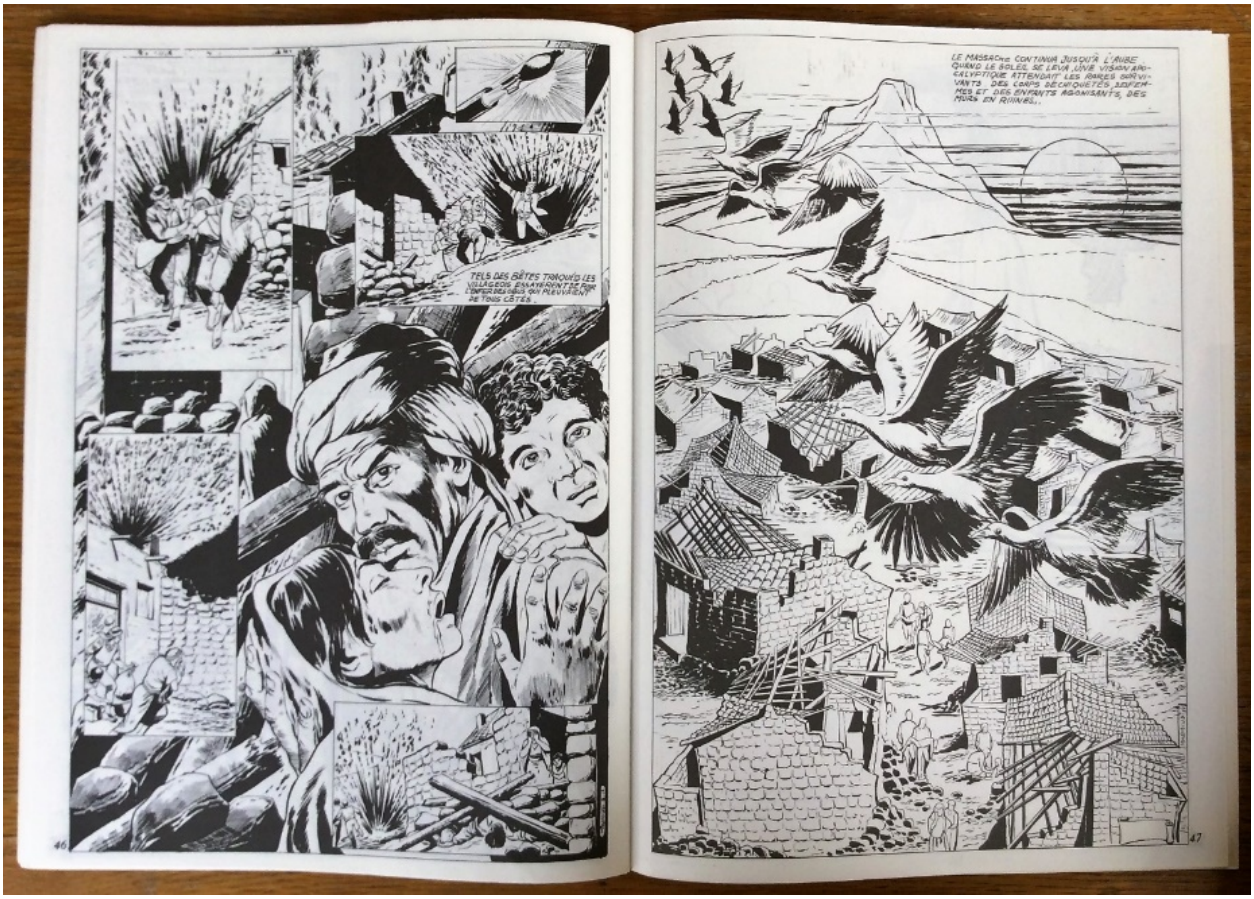

Figure 19: The final scene depicts the destruction of the village [left] and the aftermath of the destruction [right] (*Le village oublié* 46-47).

The aftermath of the bombardment is seen on the next page, where a splash panel shows the sun rising behind the mountain in the background, a flock of birds flying in the foreground, and the destroyed village somewhere between the two. The caption highlights the horror as it applies to women and children specifically—"Le massacre continua jusqu'à l'aube. Quand le soleil se leva, une vision apocalyptique attendait les rares survivants. Des corps déchiquetés, *des femmes et des enfants agonisants*, des murs en ruines…" (47, my emphasis)—even though the extra-long shot renders everyone as a genderless, faceless survivor or victim. No one is spared in the French soldiers' "barbarisme aveugle", as the prologue forewarned and as *le vieillard* remembered, looking out over a nearly identical landscape many pages ago. No longer mediated

by *le vieillard*, the reader now sees from his point of view.

Conclusion

The album's epilogue attempts to provide closure to this devastating event by assuring the reader that "La patrie n'oubliera jamais ses valeureux enfants qui ont offert leur vie pour que l'Algérie vive libre, indépendante et fière…" (n.p.). Perhaps the titular "village oublié" is not forgotten but abandoned. The brief epilogue—like the prologue—shares the page with an illustration. The image depicts a woman standing amongst the rubble with two small children at her side; the background features outlines of figures and structures with the sun rising over the rooftops (see Figure 20). Looking off into the distance, she holds her head high, beyond the top border of the frame. It recalls the book's cover art—which also features a woman and two children with the burning village in the background—but does not replicate it, since comics tradition is such that the cover art of an album depicts something that evokes the story but does not appear within the pages of the book.

Figure 20: An image of a woman standing among the rubble with two children at her side appears above the epigraph (*Le village oublié* n.p.).

The image of this survivor rising defiantly from the rubble initially suggests a symbolic relationship to the emerging nation. But the text of the epilogue lauds the deceased rather than the living. She is not one of the "valeureux enfants" who traded their lives for the nation's freedom. Nor are any other women: Khedidja, her daughter, and the women from the village are all victims of violence, but their fate is ultimately unknown or unrepresentable within the text. Seen as other or not Algerian, both *harki* characters die due to their status as traitors. Anne McClintock contends that "All nationalisms are gendered, all are invented and all are dangerous" (352).[126] This is certainly true of the FLN's version of Algerian nationalism. Per McClintock's reading of gender roles in nationalist scenarios, women's role is "metaphoric or symbolic" as they are "denied any direct relation to national agency" while men's role is metonymic in that "men are contiguous with each other and with the national whole (354-355).[127] Men remain the heroes who sacrificed their lives for the revolution, but the burden of carrying the national memory is placed upon the survivors, such as this woman from the epilogue who symbolically stands looking to the future of Algeria.

Furthermore, the epilogue and illustration appear on the colophon, the page containing information about the editor and printer—*Entreprise national du livre* (ENAL) and *Entreprise national des arts graphiques* (ENAG), respectively. Because ENAL and ENAG are on this page, the story being told cannot be separated from the mechanism behind its creation. This is a reminder that this book, like other comics of the war gene of this time, are part of a larger

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[126] *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*. "No Longer in a Future Heaven: Nationalism, Gender and Race" (352-389). Routledge, 1995.

[127] McClintock builds this idea from Elleke Boehmer's "Stories of Women and Mothers: Gender and Nationalism in the Early Fiction of Flora Nwapa" in Susheila Nasta ed., *Motherlands: Black Women's Writing from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia* (London: The Women's Press, 1991, p. 5).

legitimation project by the FLN.[128]

Masmoudi's *Le village oublié* (1983) is not among the corpus of *albums de bande dessinée* in the 2002/2003 ENAG re-editions. Although I have yet to find any selection criteria for ENAG re-editions, one can imagine that after regaining power following the Dark Decade the newly-reinstated FLN party would want certain types of stories represented in this corpus. Although we have no way of knowing for certain, we might speculate that *Le village oublié* did not balance the elements of difference and repetition—in Steve Neale's sense—within the Algerian War Genre, making it an outlier in the genre. In addition to the complex narrative styles and character diversity in *Le village* oublié, perhaps the devastating level of destruction and loss of life on the Algerian side affected the re-edition selection process. Masmoudi's oeuvre is nevertheless represented in the 21st-century re-editions with his *Tariq Ibn Zyad* and *Barberousse: Raïs Aroudj, L'homme au bras d'argent* & *Kheireddine, Le lion des mers*. Both *Tariq Ibn Zyad* and the *Barberousse* collection are drawn in an exaggerated and highly-stylized manner and are set in Algeria's distant past, far from the Algerian War Genre. Algeria's distant past is examined in my next chapter on Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir who ambitiously attempts to chronicle the entirety of the newly independent nation's history from the prehistoric era through the eve of the war of independence in *Histoire de l'Algérie* (ENAG 2003) before rethinking the Algerian War genre in *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* (Éditions Dalimen, 2011).

[128] More publication information is found on the title page but not again on the colophon. The information here is not that of ENAL or ENAG but of another entity: Mudīrīriyat al-Nashr, Quism Manshūrāt al-Atfāl, or the department of children's publications. The department's telephone number and street address are listed next to a small icon of children reading. This information is also included on the title page of *L'épopée du Cheikh Bouamama* (ENAL 1986), suggesting that it worked in conjunction with ENAL for a period of time.

CHAPTER THREE

Displacing the Algerian War Genre:
Histoire de l'Algérie and *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* by Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir

Pour comprendre l'histoire de l'Algérie on doit, d'abord, l'intégrer à celle de l'Afrique du nord ou Maghreb qui a connu, sur son sol, la succession de plusieurs civilisations.
—Histoire de l'Algérie

Cette nuit-là, ils étaient tous venus,
Des banlieues du nord du Paris,
Brandissant de leurs mains nues
Des drapeaux et slogans d'Algérie.
—17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles, "Tragédie-sur-Seine"[129]

Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir's *Histoire de l'Algérie* (1986) opens, as seen in the above quotation, by defining the nation's history through its geographical location in the Maghreb as well as by the people who have passed thorough this place. Serving as a prologue to his *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* (2011), Abbas-Kebir's poem "Tragédie-sur-Seine" immediately situates this piece of Algerian history in Paris as populated by North Africans, as seen above in its first stanza.[130] Both of these *albums de bande dessinée* are animated by the movement of people

[129] This opening quotation from *Histoire de l'Algérie* appears on the first page of the narrative (8). For *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles*, the poem "Tragédie-sur-Seine" serves as a prologue, appears in the frontmatter, and is not paginated. The poem's title is stylized as TRAGEDIE-SUR-SEINE, as signed by B.ABBAS; the capitalized title and byline are also bolded. The text reads "Cette nuit là, ils étaient tous venus" with *là* not connected to *nuit*; I changed this to *nuit-là* for ease of reading.

[130] The poem continues as follows, for a total of four stanzas: "La police du préfet Maurice Papon / Etait bien prête pour la ratonnade... / La Seine brillante sous les lampions, / Recevait les premières noyades. // Leurs corps flottants tachés de sang, / Se mélangeaient aux eaux de la Seine. / Ils étaient des manifestants impuissants, / massacrés sous l'ordre de la haine. // Ainsi étaient les actes de la nuit noire, / D'un dix sept octobre soixante et un / Un crime odieux qui reste dans l'histoire / Et aussi dans les mémoires de chacun" (original spelling and punctuation).

across geographical space against the backdrop of iconic landscapes and monuments. Movement links these works of historical representation.

The term *bédéiste* best describes Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir (1956-) whose comics career spans the medium's forms (albums, serials, and political cartoons) as well as its creative roles (*dessinateur*, *illustrateur*, *caricaturiste*, and *scénariste*).[131] Abbas-Kebir's comics œuvre attends to the depiction of Algerian history, which, in fact, is inflected by his education and work in the field of archeology. Abbas-Kebir's oeuvre includes *dessins de presse* published in periodicals, from his entry onto the comics scene in the paper *L'Unité* in 1977, to his share of caricatures and political cartoons that mark the medium during the Dark Decade—with contributions to Mustapha Tenani's satirical newspaper *El-Manchar* as well as *revues* such as the Lebanese *Sammer* and the Kuwaiti *El Arabi Essaghir*, according to Lazhari Labter's research (*Panorama de la bande dessinée algérienne* 227). Although they are beyond the scope of my analysis, these political cartoons give insight into Abbas-Kebir's political engagement in Algeria and the larger Arab World, while the scarcity of information regarding these periodicals prevents a better understanding of the nature of Abbas-Kebir's political engagement.

Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir's first *album de bande dessinée* is *L'Orchestre aux Bananes* (ENAL 1984, ENAG 2003), a collaboration between Djamel Touat (author) and Abbas-Kebir (artist);[132] this *polar* humorously depicts the investigation of a banana caper—complete with an underground banana stash accessed through a secret passage behind a fake wall that opens by a

[131] His biography in the ENAG re-editions highlights his role as dessinateur–illustrateur-caricaturiste (see, for example, the back cover of *Histoire de l'Algérie*), while the back of *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulle*s describes him as "un archéologue, musicien, illustrateur et bédéiste de la région de Miliana" (Éditions Dalimen 2011).

[132] The artist is credited here under the name Ben Abbas; it was not uncommon for cartoonists of this generation to publish under a shortened pseudonym.

mechanism disguised as a musical instrument—while pointing to contemporary issues of corruption and food shortages and even evoking the idea of a "banana republic".[133] Published the same year, Abbas-Kebir's album *Abdelmoumène Ibn Ali, Le Chevalier du Maghreb* depicts the Almohade dynasty and its eponymous founder (ENAL 1984, ENAG 2003).[134] The Almohade dynasty appears again briefly in *Histoire de l'Algérie* (ENAL 1986, ENAG 2003), which traces Algerian history from its prehistoric origins to its twentieth-century call for independence.[135] His album *Raïs Hamidou* (ENAL-ENAP 1990) depicts the eponymous Algerian corsair.[136] His penchant for the depiction of Algerian history in *bande dessinée* continues into the twenty first century, as seen in *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* (Éditions Dalimen 2011), which treats the Algerian War for Independence through the violent police repression of a peaceful Algerian protest in Paris. Recent work by the bédéiste includes *Les enquêtes de l'inspecteur Adel* and *P'tit Omar: La révolution dans le cartable*, both of which were published in 2017 by Éditions Ingese. *Les enquêtes de l'inspecteur Adel* falls in the genre of *polar* or *BD policière* (which evokes Abbas-Kebir's entry into albums via *L'Orchestre aux Bananes*), while *P'tit Omar: La révolution dans le cartable* engages with the Algerian War both within its pages and through its promotion

[133] The ENAG edition of the album includes a second story, "*Une enquête de l'inspecteur Chebka: Alerte au trésor*" (2003).

[134] I use the spelling as listed in the ENAG editions' biography of Abbas-Kebir, but alternate spellings appear elsewhere, likely due to issues of transliteration, as suggested by the 2003 cover that shows the title written in both Arabic and French (Labter *Panorama* 201). See Ferhani for a discussion of this album as an exception to historical categories in Algerian comics (*50 Ans* 39).

[135] I have yet to locate a copy of the original publication, whose editor can be inferred as ENAL due to the time of its creation, which is likely 1986, the year accompanying Abbas-Kebir's signature on the final page (63). The images from this album that appear in Figures are photographs I took of the album's 2003 edition, published by ENAG.

[136] Labter categorizes this album as one of Abbas-Kebir's "contes pour enfants" (227).

in Algeria, notably in the 2018 book signing in Miliana that took place in commemoration of *la journée nationale du Chahid* in 2018.[137] This event points to Abbas-Kebir's engagement with the nation's history at the local level and his strong ties to the region of Miliana where he was born, and where he still lives and works at the *musée de l'Emir Abdelkader à Miliana*.[138]

This chapter examines *Histoire de l'Algérie* and *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* by Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir to consider how the cartoonist chronicles Algerian history in the medium. Reading these two *albums de bande dessinée* together provides the opportunity to interrogate the parameters of the Algerian War Genre. This chapter argues that the work of Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir displaces the genre in question. For *Histoire de l'Algérie*, this displacement is both temporal and spatial: the resistance narrative that characterizes stories of the Algerian War becomes a lens for understanding the long history of the nation that dates back to prehistoric man; this history is, in turn, inextricably linked to the geography of the larger Maghreb. In the case of *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles*, the genre is displaced in that the violence of the Algerian War takes place in France rather than in French Algeria. Building upon the fact that both albums are animated by the movement of people, my analysis investigates how the albums depict the people and places that inflect the nation's history. I first examine *Histoire de l'Algérie* to argue that the album itself is a site of cultural layering that reflects the layering of cultures and their relics on Algerian land, or rather, the geographical territory now known as Algeria. The second portion of the chapter turns to *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* to argue that the album calls

[137] For a discussion of the book event, see the page on Abbas-Kebir on Algermiliana.com: www.algermiliana.com/blog/le-coin-de-abbas-k-benyoucef/debat-et-vente-dedicace.html.

[138] Although the museum's website does not list him as such, many comics blogs in Algeria list Abbas-Kebir as the director of the museum, as do the major comics websites Bédéthèque and Lambiek (www.bedetheque.com/auteur-47337-BD-Abbas-Kebir-Benyoucef.html and www.lambiek.net/comiclopedia.html).

attention to verbal expression through the titular seventeen *bulles* (speech balloons) amid the overwhelming visual strategies that make visible this episode of Algerian history in order to question how history is constructed in *bande dessinée*.[139]

Histoire de l'Algérie

Histoire de l'Algérie is the ambitious attempt to chronicle the entirety of Algerian history—from the prehistoric era until November 1, 1954. The events of the Algerian War of Independence are noticeably absent in this album. The idea that the Algerian War is a "paradigm though which all of Algerian history passes" is certainly applicable to *Histoire de l'Algérie* (Douglas and Malti-Douglas "The Algerian Strip" 73). Representations of Algerian resistance against invading peoples appear in other *albums de bande dessinée* from Algeria such as the story of the eponymous anti-Roman Numidian prince in Ali Moulay's *Jugurtha* (circa 1990) or tales of 19th-century anti-French revolts in Mustapha Tenani's *Le Fusil chargé* (1986).[140] *Histoire de l'Algérie* is unique in its scope and in that it formulates the nation's history as a long history of resistance against those who entered into Algerian land—from the Phoenicians to the French. The album traces the routes of the people who traveled to the geographic space known today as Algeria as well as those of Algerian travelers who ventured into the Mediterranean and beyond its shores. In this section of the chapter, I argue that Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir's album presents Algeria's history as one of resistance, thereby creating a mythical Algeria that long

[139] The primary texts in this chapter have not been translated into English, but their titles' English equivalents are: *Histoire de l'Algérie* [*History of Algeria*] and *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* [*October 17th, 1961: 17 Speech Balloons*] with "Tragédie-sur-Seine" ["Tragedy on the Seine"] (my translations).

[140] See also *L'épopée & Cheikh Bouamama* by Masmoudi (1986) and the "Koudier" stories in *M'Quidèch*.

predates the nation state. This chapter unearths the ways in which the album constructs Algerian cultural history through the movement of people to and from Algeria and the ensuing cultural exchange.

Covering Algeria's long history

If the cover of *Histoire de l'Algérie* (1986) is taken at face value, Algerian history is a series of wars. Under the author-artist's name and the album's title printed in a vaguely ancient script, four distinct images of combat appear in color in a grid layout on a field of dark blue (see Figure 21).[141] Marked as militaristic by their shields, spears, explosions, and firearms, these vignettes correspond to the four sections that organize the album's historical account: "L'Algérie dans l'Antiquité" (7-21), "La Conquête musulmane" (23-35), "L'Algérie ottomane" (37-45), and "L'Occupation française" (47-63).[142] This cover art from the original publication (1986) also appears on the cover of the re-published album (2003); in keeping with the format of the other ENAG *bande dessinée* re-editions from this time, the original cover's four-image grid (see Figure 21) appears but reduced in size on a field of white. From the cover art of the original publication of *Histoire de l'Algérie* (1986), each of the four vignette illustrations reappears within the album's pages: first, as a full-page splash panel serving as a title page for its section of history, and then again within the narrative itself as a single frame on a page, for a total of three appearances (i.e. on the cover, as section title pages, and in the narrative). However, in the case of the 2003 version of the album, the images appear a fourth time since the new hardcover bears

[141] The image in Figure 21 is a photograph I took of *Histoire de l'Algérie* (2003); this is the case for all figures featuring images from this text.

[142] The album's sections, in English, are "Algeria in Antiquity", "The Muslim Conquest", "Ottoman Algeria", and "The French Occupation" (my translations).

a reproduction of the original cover art while still containing the original cover design within its pages. In what follows, I use the original cover art's four vignettes and their iterations in the album as a point of entry into each section of this dense historical work, by investigating the significance of each image chosen to represent its respective piece of Algeria's past.

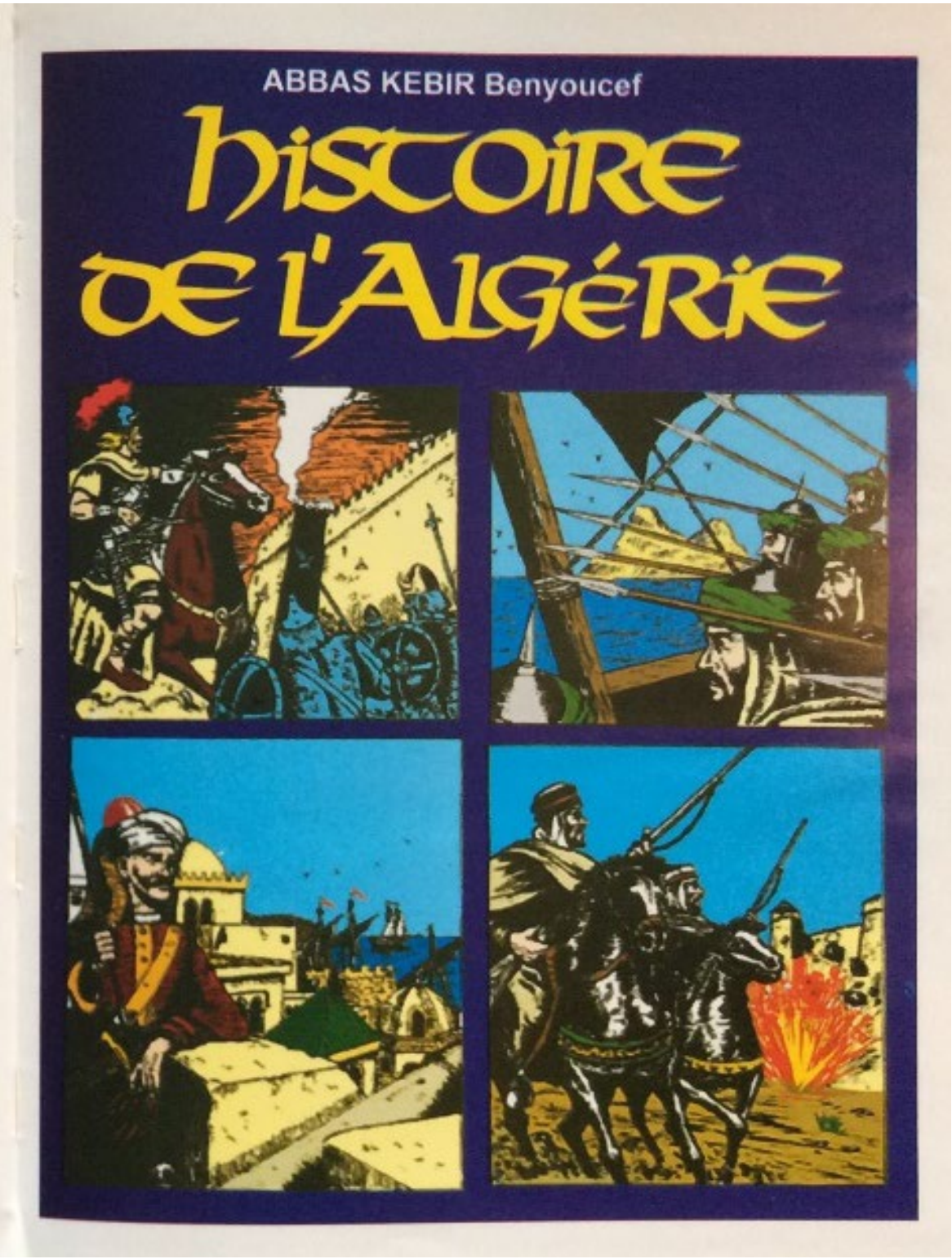

Figure 21: The cover shows images in color that correspond to the album's four sections [from top left to bottom right]: "L'Algérie dans l'Antiquité", "La Conquête musulmane", "L'Algérie ottomane", and "L'Occupation française" (*Histoire de l'Algérie* 1986).

The first historical period in the album, titled "L'Algérie dans l'Antiquité" (7-21), covers prehistory through the 6th century (7-21). The cover image corresponding to Antiquity depicts an attack on a fortified structure (see Figure 21). The composition of the items in the frame draw the eye to a man on horseback who is turned to face a fortification to which he is pointing, as he appears to give orders to the soldiers at his feet who are drawn in shadow. The leader's blond hair under a helmet visually marks this character as European—both by the fairness of his hair (as well as his skin) and by the horned helmet topped with a plume, which can be interpreted as metonym for warring Europeans.[143] His troops also wear these helmets and wield shields and spears. In the background, the soldiers atop the fortification are identified only by their spears that appear above the wall; smoke rises into the dark sky. With the Algerians figured only by their defensive spears, even without context, this image associates Antiquity with invading forces.

This image appears again and enlarged on this section's title page (see Figure 22) below the large bold lettering that announces "L'Algérie dans l'Antiquité" and above the caption that reads: "Il suit son itinéraire terrestre et assiège *Hippone* (Annaba)" (7, original emphasis). While the caption's reference to Hippone might be transparent to some readers, the context comes later with the image's third occurrence in the album. The image's final form is one frame on a page dominated by the story of the march of the Vandals; it shares the page with other images depicting the route taken through the strait of Gibraltar, the massive Vandal army, their leader, and their violence toward the local people. The captions are interwoven on the page, not constrained by caption boxes, and provide the following text to supplement the images:

[143] The famous French bande dessinée, *Asterix*, exemplifies this imagery. The Gaulish warrior characters wear helmets with plumes and horns while they fight the Roman Empire.

*E*n mai 429 *Genséric*, roi des *Vandales*, traverse le détroit de *Gibraltar* et aborde la côte africaine, en amenant tout son peuple avec lui, soit 80,000 personnes, représentant 15,000 soldats environ.

Il suit son itinéraire terrestre et assiège *Hippone* (Annaba).

La marche des Vandales est marquée par des scènes atroces: destruction des arbres et des cultures, massacre des populations, incendies. (19, original emphasis)

The caption includes what the illustrations do not show—the staggering number of Vandal people who came to North Africa. The illustrated map reminds the reader of the small geographic distance between the European and African continents by connecting the two with arrows tracing the Vandals' route south.

The image in question depicts the siege of Hippone by the Vandal king Genséric; here his fair hair is rendered in black and white, and the plume on his helmet protrudes well past the image's frame, visually suggesting his invasion of other geographic spaces (19).[144] The city of Hippone, whose actual destruction by the Vandals is not included in the album, occupies an important place in Algerian history as well as in *Histoire de l'Algérie*. During Antiquity, Hippone—now Annaba (as the caption twice reminds the reader)—was settled by the Phoenicians, served as a center of Christianity, and gave its name to Saint Augustine (of Hippo), who lived there.[145] The album visually reconstructs the cultural layering that took place in this ancient location, making Hippone a fitting choice to represent the period on the album's cover.

[144] The Vandal ruler's helmet protrudes past the frame in the previous two instances of this image, but it is most evident here. Furthermore, this comic technique is used for all instances of this character on this page (19).

[145] Furthermore, this location took on yet another role in terms of historical significance as the city of Bône in French Algeria, where it was the site of a major French settlement.

The moment in time in which Hippone is depicted in the cover art fits within its war theme and represents the desire to defend this prototypical and anachronistic Algeria from this destructive movement of people into and across the Algerian landscape.[146] While "L'Algérie dans l'Antiquité" elsewhere illustrates productive cultural exchange, this image underscores the violent history of invasion and resistance.

Figure 22: The image introduces the section titled "L'Algérie dans l'Antiquité" (7) and appears within the account of the March of the Vandals (19) (*Histoire de l'Algérie* 1986).

[146] At this point in the album, the people living in what is now Algeria are referenced using collective terms indicating their belonging or their origins in that place "l'homme préhistorique" (8), "[l]es premiers habitants de cette contrée" (9), "les populations indigènes" (10), "les autochtones" (15), and "les populations autochtones" (17) or using designations specific to a time or place "l'homme préhistorique" (8), "les Carthaginois" (12), and "les tribus" (18).

"La Conquête musulmane" (23-35), the album's second section, traces the spread of Islam from the 7th to the 15th centuries. The image of "La Conquête musulmane" on the album cover depicts the sea, thus setting it apart from its counterparts geographically. Soldiers on a wooden ship occupy the foreground, with their spears pointed in the same direction as their gaze. A landmass appears in the distance, with its distinct dual peaks standing out against the blue of the water and the cloudless sky. The ship is passing but not approaching the only land in sight, thus leaving the ship's trajectory unclear but indicating that it is passing through the Strait of Gibraltar (see Figure 21).

Like the other section title pages, the image from the cover art occupies most of the page, with "La Conquête musulmane" hovering above with a caption below it. The caption reveals that "De 1153 à 1162, il envoie plusieurs expéditions vers l'Espagne et réussit à trouver un terrain d'entente aux émirs musulmans qui y règnent" (23). The caption provides context for the voyage while introducing yet another player in Algerian history—Spain. The caption's subject—"il"—refers to Almohade ruler Abdel-Moumin. The ship to Spain, in its third iteration in the narrative, shares the page with a map tracing "Les étapes de la conquête Almohade" across North Africa (32). Abdel-Moumin, after achieving the goal of his predecessor Ibn Toumért to "soumettre tout l'atlas marocain", expanded Almohade rule into Spain (32). Like the previous Almoravide rule, the reigning Almohade state wanted to expand its rule to include Spain, particularly the Andalusia region, under the guise of reconstituting Muslim unity in Spain during this time of fighting between religious groups. Overall, when considered in its context in the Almohade expansion, this image reveals the double meaning of "La Conquête musulmane"—which refers to the conquest *of* North Africa by invading Muslim forces as well as to conquest *by* North Africans (both within the Maghreb and then across the Mediterranean) during a time of shifting

dynastic rule.

The album next depicts Ottoman rule in Algeria from the 16th to 19th centuries. The corresponding cover image for "L'Algérie ottomane" (37-45) shows a man atop a fortified structure as he looks toward the sea and a ship in the distance. He bears a weapon but leans casually, his body language conveying his ease in the situation. His turban indicates Ottoman-style dress of the time, and his long mustache with its upturned ends matches that of other men in this section of the album, especially the "janissaires" and "corsaires barbaresques" (43). "L'Algérie ottomane" begins with this enlarged image and its accompanying text, which reads as follows: "Hérissée de fortifications et de défenses *contre les attaques ennemies*, Alger prend figure de citadelle inexpugnable" (37, my emphasis). Visually, Algiers is presented as foreboding and hostile to invaders by depicting the city's skyline as a series of walled or otherwise fortified structures, which is reinforced verbally by the caption and the use of the adjectives *hérissée* and *inexpugnable* (37). The prepositional phrase "contre les attaques ennemies" does not appear within the narrative itself with the final instance of this image (37), thereby giving purpose to the mightily drawn citadel and the nearby ships.

In the narrative, the image in question appears in the upper left-hand corner of the page. Following the syntax of comics and the frame's *mise-en-page*, it is the first object for the reader to consume before moving to the caption-image-caption series that appears to the right of this image. The caption then explains that "Entre le XVIe et XVIIIe siècle, l'état d'Alger s'organise et délimite ses frontières avec les pays voisins" to give context to a frame illustrating the city walls from a distance (42). Under this image is the caption (see above analysis) describing Algiers as a "citadelle inexpugnable" (42). The bottom half of the page is devoted to depicting failed attacks from the sea, with the fortified port city appearing as the backdrop of both attacks.

This image's place of prominence—both on the album cover and again to announce this section—reflects the prominence of the city of Algiers under Ottoman rule. "L'Algérie ottomane" illustrates the transformation of this city into a citadel and then *l'état d'Alger* (42) with the armed support of the Barberousse brothers, the Regency's *janissaires*, and the *corsaires barbaresques* of the powerful *flotte algerienne* (43). Notably absent from "L'Algérie ottomane" is the Ottoman invasion of Algeria, with the album thereby painting this portion of the historical account in terms of the positive effects for the locals rather than as a bellicose moment in history.

The fourth and final image on the cover of *Histoire de l'Algérie* depicts an explosion, a fortified structure, and two rifle-wielding men on horseback. The composition of elements in this frame draws the reader's eye along the gaze of these men to the right of the frame where an explosion is happening at the base of the fort. The men are visually coded as Algerian through vestimentary markers, dark facial hair, and the ornamentation on their horses' bridles. Their position outside of the fort suggests its occupation. The album's final section, titled "L'Occupation française" (47-63), depicts the French presence in Algeria from the *coup d'éventail* (29 April 1827) until the *Toussaint Rouge* (1 November 1954). In keeping with the *mise-en-page* of the other section title pages, the enlarged cover image is rendered in black and white, and the caption states that "De l'est, elle gagnera la presque totalité du territoire et se poursuivra bien après la mort au champ d'honneur d'El-Mokrani et la reddition d'El-Haddad, cheikh des Rahmania" (47). While this text provides the identities of the men, the event in question (referred to only by the subject pronoun "elle") is described later in the album.

Within the narrative, the image of El-Mokrani and El-Haddad appears for the third and final time at the bottom of the page describing and showing the increased confiscation of land, exportation of crops, growing wealth of the caïds, and increased poverty of the colonized people,

all of which was exasperated by famine and disease (57). The result of which is that "Cette dégradation dramatique des conditions économiques avec les atteintes à la vie spirituelle et la volonté de s'affranchir de la domination étrangère, engendrent la grande insurrection de 1871, animée par *El-Mokrani* et *Cheikh El-Haddad*" (57, original emphasis). The image therefore depicts *la grande insurrection de 1871*, or the Mokrani Revolt, a large multi-tribe uprising and attacks across the country lead by these men (of the powerful Mokrani family and the Rahmaniyya religious fraternity, respectively). As the image representing this portion of Algerian history, this insurrection symbolizes the collective resistance of the Algerian people against French colonization and reflects this section's depiction as a series of revolts.

Together, the four images on the album cover seemingly introduce Algerian history as composed of moments of military violence or as a series of wars. The grid layout presents visual and thematic symmetry (see Figure 21). The images from antiquity and the French occupation (top left and bottom right, respectively) both show men on horseback in the foreground looking to the right of the page toward a fort in the background; in addition to the similar visual composition, both images depict resistance against invading forces. The images from the Muslim conquest and Ottoman rule (top right and bottom left, respectively) show moments of Algerian power, thematically linking these diagonally adjacent images of the sea and ships. Behind the cover's bellicose representation of history, the history of the nation's culture and society unfolds.

Digging up Algeria's past

In addition to depicting a long history of Algerian resistance to invasion, *Histoire de l'Algérie* highlights the nation's achievements—in agriculture, architecture, arts and sciences, and government, among others—that advanced alongside or often as a result of the arrival of

other civilizations in Algeria. To fully appreciate Abbas-Kebir's ambitious album, it is important to consider the album as belonging a corpus of historical research on Algeria, keeping in mind that the cartoonist is, in fact, an archeologist by trade. In *A History of Algeria*, James McDougall presents the state of scholarship on the modern nation (1500s-present). McDougall writes the following of Algeria:

> The landscape is striking; the way people live in it, mark it and move through it, build upon it, name it and make a living from it displays both the diversity of contemporary life and the depth of historical time against which contemporary life is played out. Algeria's modern history has not generally been approached through descriptions of a beautiful and fascinating country, or a diverse and creative society going about its daily life. The history of Algeria, since the Ottoman period […] has often been written about only in terms of upheaval, rupture, violence and trauma. That these have existed in overabundance in Algeria is not to be doubted, and the pages that follow will seek to account for them in their place. But the history of Algeria as a series of familiar clichés—heroism and horror, triumph and tragedy, anger and agony—is only part of what has made this country what it is, and does not begin to account adequately for the ways Algerians themselves have lived their lives, understood their country and their place in the world, have made, and continually make day by day, their own futures with the materials their past has given them.
>
> No single study can give an adequate account of the complexity, the suppressed possibilities and unintended outcomes, the many and incommensurable aspects of the modern history of such a richly varied land and such a diverse society with such a tumultuous past. (*A History of Algeria* 2)

Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir's *Histoire de l'Algérie* would seemingly agree with McDougal that Algeria's tumultuous and violent past is but one part of the nation's history, and the album attempts to flesh out the other parts by drawing the nation's diversity, achievements, and arts. To apply McDougal's description of the Algerian landscape, the album draws "the way people live in it, mark it and move through it, build upon it, name it" (*A History of Algeria* 2). The album, like the land itself, is a site of cultural layering. To bring to the fore the cultural layering that takes place in the album's historical account, in what follows I use an archeological approach to analyze the artifacts that Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir renders on the album's pages as evidence of a long, rich Algerian culture. Furthermore, I examine the interplay between cultural layering and a culture of resistance that creates a narrative of Algerian-ness that runs throughout history and predates Algeria itself.

The narrative of *Histoire de l'Algérie* and its section "L'Algérie dans l'Antiquité" begins with "l'homme préhistorique" who is drawn in the center of the page (8). The arrangement of the panels within the space of the page create what is known, in comics narratology, as a complex story layout (i.e. the irregularly shaped panels are not in grids and tiers) to showcase the visual and verbal elements that tell his story and even instruct the reader on how to consume this historical oeuvre.

A message to the reader appears across the top of this first page, announcing that "Pour comprendre l'histoire de l'Algérie on doit, d'abord, l'intégrer à celle de l'Afrique du nord ou Maghreb qui a connu, sur son sol, la succession de plusieurs civilisations" (8). In this album, one cannot separate Algerian history from North Africa's history of many civilizations, which I read as peoples of the Maghreb as well as all who "live in it, mark it and move through it, build upon it, name it" (McDougall 2). The shape of the caption box containing this text conveys meaning

for how to read the composition of the page. The scroll-shaped caption invokes a kind of gravitas of antiquity and only appears with the opening lines to each of the album's four sections, visually marking its text as separate from the page's narrative content. Rendered as an unfurled scroll, this caption box is one of many elements that share the space of the page but otherwise do not belong together in the same spatial relationship.

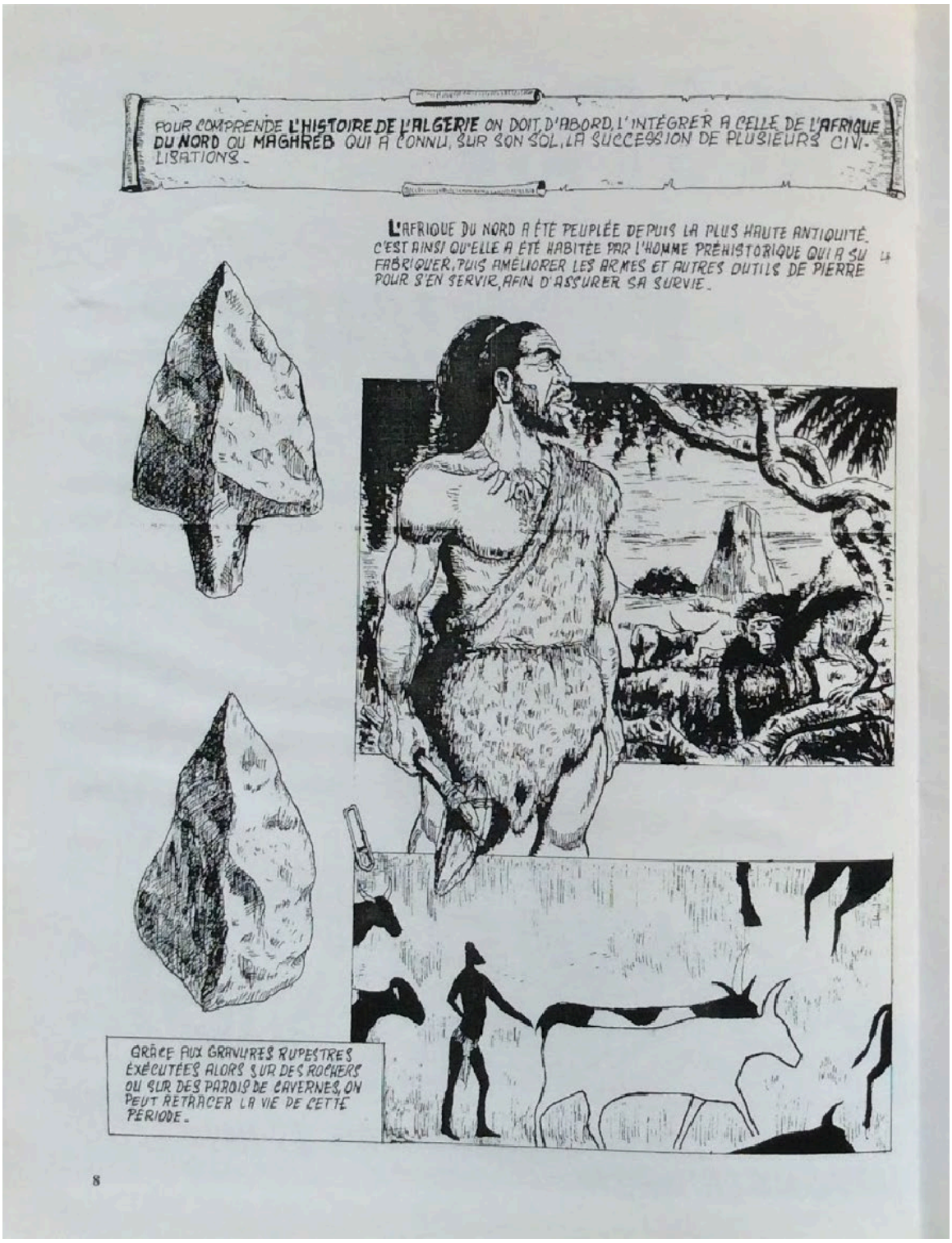

Figure 23: Prehistoric man shares the page with art and tools (*Histoire de l'Algérie* 8).

Below the scroll, the page reads as follows: a caption describes North Africa's early inhabitants above images of early man and his tools, which is followed by a caption and image on the subject of cave paintings (see Figure 23). The earliest people of Algeria made tools and created art, and the album provides artifacts of both on this page. Prehistoric man, according to the caption, "a su fabriquer, puis améliorer les armes et autres outils de pierre" (8); the corresponding panel shows a muscular man holding a weapon with a stone head against a backdrop of the Algerian landscape comprised of a distant mountain, an ox-type animal on the plains, and a monkey in a tangled tree. The man wears a tunic made of fur and a necklace of teeth, thereby showing the efficacy of his tools for hunting and making use of animal materials as well as for protection against animal predators. Two arrowheads are drawn to the left of this panel in a space without panels or frames, as if the cartoonist placed physical artifacts on the surface of the page.

Similarly, the image of a cave painting appears to be a photograph (or another facsimile of this subject) that is attached to—and layered onto—the page with a paperclip. This image shows a man standing next to oxen. The cave art's subject matter, composition, and placement directly under the illustration of prehistoric man suggests that this photograph inspired the cartoonist's drawings, which is supported by the corresponding caption—"Grâce aux graveurs rupestres exécutées alors sur des rochers ou sur des parois de cavernes, on peut retracer la vie de cette période" (8). Furthermore, it suggests that the historical account in the album is based upon the artifacts and other archeological evidence.

The introduction of North Africa's earliest inhabitants through their inventiveness and art works to create a national narrative that includes achievements and creativity. The album itself was published again in the 21st century to promote Algerian cultural production, especially *bande*

dessinée,[147] as explained in the following text:

> Ce panoramique incruste cicatriciellement quarante (40) ans de nos totems et de nos tabous, le talent aidant de nos dessinateurs; cette série […] réédite, après un lifting conjoncturalisé éditorialement: pour dire, montrer et révéler la griffe algérienne dans le gotha du VIII[e] art, et investir dans les polyphonies concertatives artistiques et intellectuelles des aires communicationnelles mondiales, un espace, une confluence, et noué une agora de choix digne de nos ancêtres rupestres de Tassili qui, jadis avaient inventé la graphie de l'image.[148] (*Histoire de l'Algérie* 2003 n.p.)

Although it appears between the end papers and title pages for all ENAG *bande dessinée* re-editions, this *Avertissement* from the editor seems to speak directly to this work by referencing Tassili n'Ajjer. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Tassili n'Ajjer in southeast Algeria is one of the world's most important groups of rock art, made up thousands of prehistoric engravings and paintings.[149] The *Avertissement* establishes a direct connection between this prehistoric art and Algerian *bande dessinée*, positioning cartoonists like Abbas-Kebir as direct descendants of the inventors of "la graphie de l'image" (n.p.).

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[147] This ENAG series seeks to elevate the status of Algerian *bande dessinée* into "le gotha du VIIIe art"—that is, into the classification of arts. This mention of the eight art is curious since the other printed instance of *bande dessinée* as the eighth art appeared in a 1964 issue of *Spirou* when its cartoonists did not realize that television already held this honor. (The issue of *Spirou* in question is number 1392 from December 17, 1964. See "Les Series font la loi" in *L'Express* for more on television as the eighth art.) *Bande dessin*e is synonmous with *le neuvième art* since Francis Lacassin's *Pour un neuvième art: La Bande Dessinée* (1971) argued for the merits of the medium among the highest art forms (following—in chronological order—architecture, sculpture, visual arts, music, literature, stage arts, cinema, and television).

[148] This citation reflects the spelling in the original *avertissement*.

[149] See UNESCO.org for more on the significance of the more than 15,000 engravings and paintings at Tassili n'Ajjer.

The overall effect of the artifacts and images of prehistoric man on the page invites an archeological approach to reading the album. The disparate elements are visually connected through the technique of encrustation, where images are layered onto one another (e.g. the illustration of the man's weapon enters the panel with the photograph of the rock art) on the page, the effect of which makes the page a conceptual space onto which history is drawn and written. Furthermore, this beginning to Algerian history establishes the geographic space now known as Algeria as inhabited before the arrival of the Phoenicians, Romans, Vandals (see above analysis), and Byzantines, whose presence in "L'Algérie dans l'Antiquité" is evidenced by artifacts of coins, sculptures, pottery, and architecture alongside representations of resistance to this presence. The juxtaposition of presence and resistance is accentuated throughout this section of the album where, for example, a single page showcases the distinct classical style of Roman architecture like "le tombeau de la Chrétienne, très célèbre monument qui se trouve à proximité de Cherchell" (17.4) while it also reveals the toll of Roman colonization that sought to "romaniser les populations autochtones. Si certains se laissent assimiler, la plupart… se réfugient dans les montagnes et nourrissent de l'hostilité envers ces envahisseurs étrangers" (17.5-17.6). By drawing classical Roman architecture as the backdrop for anti-Roman sentiments, the album uses the visual-verbal medium to underscore the juxtaposition of presence and resistance.

"La Conquête musulmane" depicts the spread of Islam as a dual conquest, as established above in the analysis of the album's cover art. The first conquest is the invasion of North Africa by Muslim forces, and the second is the conquest by North Africans of other North Africans (as well as Mediterranean neighbors in Andalusia) despite their resistance to the initial conquest. This section of the album announces that "Avec l'avènement de l'*Islam*, les *arabes* vont porter le message *coranique* aux quatre coins du monde", thereby introducing Muslim Arabs as the next

civilization to come to Algeria (24, original emphasis).

The scene with la Kahina illustrates the shift between the two conquests. Hassan Ibn en Noman of Egypt[150] and his army move West across North Africa, forcefully entering and occupying this land until reaching Algeria and the land ruled by "une reine puissante, surnommée la Kahina" (25). The album represents this resistance figure who, in a desperate attempt to protect "le pays" from Hassan and his troops, addresses her compatriots, saying that "La terre est suffisamment riche pour procurer de quoi vivre vous et vos bêtes mais, ces arabes, venant du pays du soleil levant, veulent s'emparer des villes. Ils sont en quête d'or et d'argent… *Détruisons* les murailles! *Incendions* les forêts! *Empoissons* les puits! Il faut que l'ennemi ne puisse trouver ni ombre ni refuge!..." (26, original emphasis). It is notable that this female historical figure speaks, but that her words appear within a speech balloon indicates the album's treatment of la Kahina as a figure of resistance alongside Massinissa of Numidia who declared "L'Afrique aux Africains!..." (12) and later l'Emir Abdelkader. Directly under this image of la Kahina rallying her troops (whose fists are raised in the air in support) is that of Hassan's troops and its corresponding caption announcing his triumph over la Kahina. The last panel on this page shows men greeting one another with a minaret in the background, its high walls evoking her call—"Détruisons les murailles!" (26). This architectural symbol of Islam rises out of the frame to visually announce the acceptance of Islam, which is verbally introduced as follows: "Depuis, on commence à embrasser massivement l'Islam, religion de justice et d'équité qui permet de s'exprimer pleinement et de contribuer à l'expansion et l'épanouissement de la civilisation *arabo-islamique*" (26, original emphasis). The use of the pronoun *on* ensures that the details of this seemingly peaceful transition remain vague. This scene shows both the resistance to Islam in

[150] This is the spelling within the album, but another common spelling of this name is al-Nu'man.

Algeria as well as its immediate and lasting influence there (26).

This period represents one of growth—both cultural and geographical. The album dedicates space to burgeoning agriculture and commerce (29); developments in the fields of art, culture, and economy (30); monuments, minarets, and mosques across the Maghreb and in Spain (33); and finally, to education, knowledge, and the spread of Arabic (35). "La Conquête musulmane" contains nine maps that depict the conquest within the Maghreb during a time of shifting dynastic rule and the spread of Islam throughout the Maghreb and across the Mediterranean. Four maps show the entirety of the Maghreb and its changing rule and borders over time (see Figure 24, from top left to bottom right): the 8th-century *royaumes* Aghlabide, de Tahert, and Idrisseide (28); the 11th-century *royaumes* Ziride, Hammadite, Zènetes, and independent tribes (30); "Les étapes de la conquête Almohade" of the 12th century (32); and *royaumes* Hafcide, Merinde, and Abd-el-Wadide in the 13th-15th centuries (34). Other maps of the Maghreb focus on specific regions and events (see Figure 24, bottom right): one map depicts the 10th-century founding of Algiers and other cities including Achir, the "capitale du nouvel état Ziride" (29), while another traces the Almoravide march from the Sahara and the Almoravide empire in the 11th century (31). The final three maps show the conquest of land beyond the continent (see Figure 24, bottom left): the *royaume* Aghlabide departs from Kairouan to conquer Sicily and Syracuse in the 8th century; the "nouveau gouverneur d'Ifriqya" begins the 8th-century conquest of Spain by crossing the Strait of Gibraltar (27); and the Almoravide empire reestablishes power in Spain in the 11th century (31). The maps aid the reader in following the changing Algerian political landscape, while the repeated imagery of maps throughout this section of the album establishes the theme of movement across geographical space via *tressage*. The combined effect of the maps and renderings of Islamic architecture is one of cultural

layering, where new geographies are sketched out and monuments are built to reflect the changing political and cultural climate.

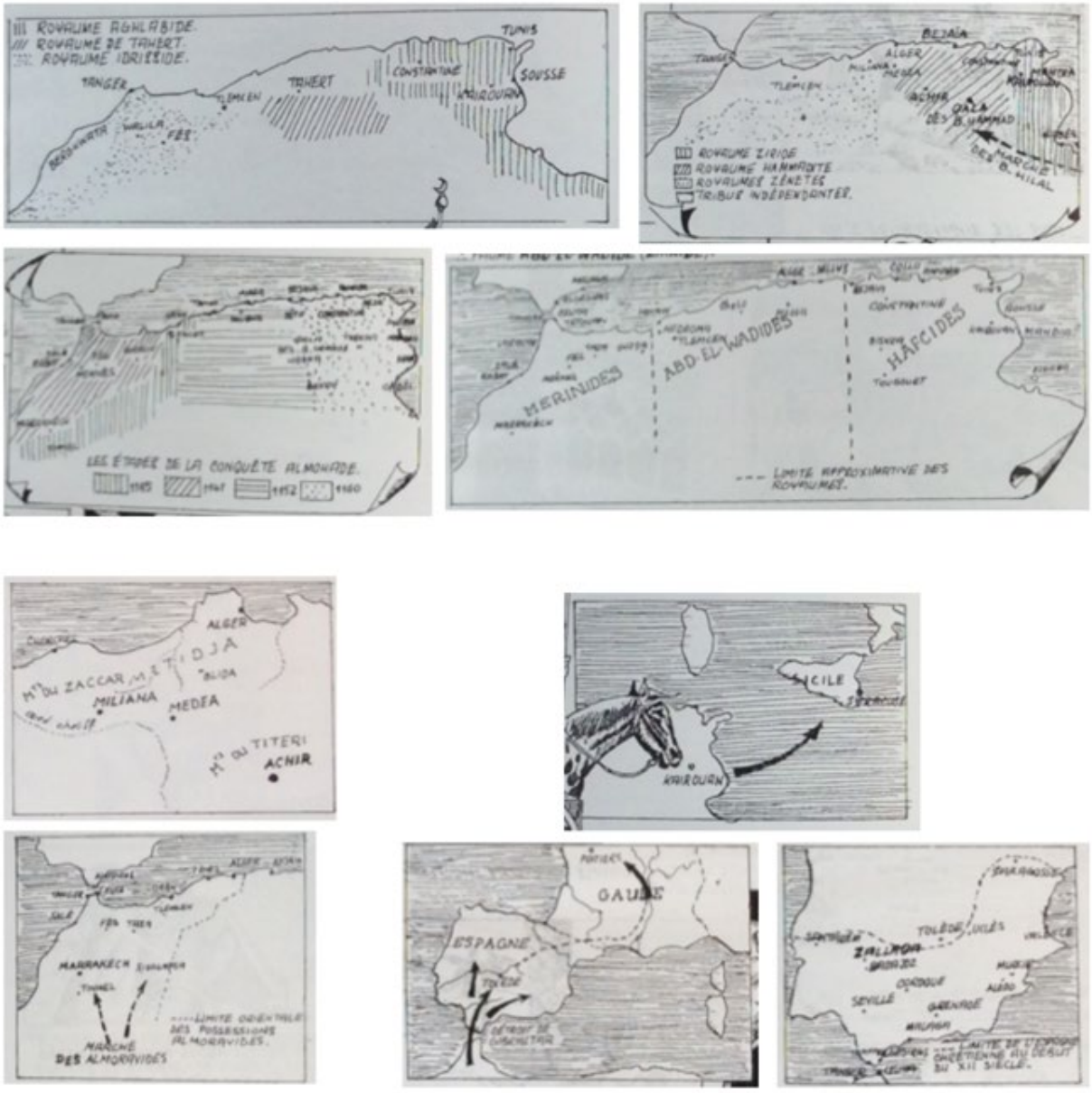

Figure 24: The maps of the entire Maghreb [top grouping] depict its regions and names during the 8th , 11th, 12th, and 13th-15th centuries (28, 30, 32, 34). Other maps of the Maghreb [bottom left] highlight new 10th-century cities (29) and the Almoravide empire in the 11th century (31). The maps beyond the Maghreb [bottom right] depict the 8th-century conquest of Sicily (28) and the conquests of Spain in the 8th and 11th centuries (27, 31).

"L'Algérie ottomane" draws this period as dominated by the Barberousse brothers and the Ottoman Empire. The opening lines for this section state that "*A*près la chute de *Grenade* en 1492, qui marque l'achèvement de la *Reconquista*, les arabes quittent l'Espagne. Ils sont poursuivis par les espagnols et les portugais" (38, original emphasis). The album describes the solution to this new attack as follows:

> Pour parer à ces lourdes menaces qui pèsent sur le pays, on sollicite le secours de deux frères, *Aroudj* et *Kheireddine Barberousse* (de l'île de Lesbos), qui se trouvait à Djidjel et semaient la terreur en méditerranée orientale.
>
> Au nom de l'Islam, ils répondent à l'appel qui leur est lancé et font une entrée triomphale dans Alger, en 1516. Ainsi, les frères Barberousse sont considérés comme les précurseurs de *l'Algérie ottomane*. (39, original emphasis).

The Barberousse brothers arrive triumphantly as well as powerfully, since these two men are presented in the text as the forerunners to an entire empire's presence.[151] Furthermore, the album posits that "C'est vraisemblablement lui le fondateur de la *république d'Alger*" to describe Kheireddine Barberousse (40, original emphasis). The origins of an Algerian State are sketched out in the story of the Barberousse brothers, who predate Ottoman Algeria by two years and who fight the "lourdes menaces qui pèsent sur le pays" (39). Here, "le pays" marks the first instance of referring to Algeria using this term. Kheireddine even founds the Regency of Algiers, an official Ottoman state. As opposed to the visual-verbal account of the Barberousse brothers' arrival in Algeria, the narrative describes the Ottoman presence in Algeria through descriptions of administrative rule rather than the actual arrival of the Ottoman Empire in North Africa. The

[151] The brothers appear in other bande dessinée from Algeria, notably in the work of Benattou Masmoudi. *Raïs Aroudj, L'homme au bras d'argent* and *Barberousse: Kheireddine, Le lion des mers* were originally published in 1991 by Alif then republished in 2003 by ENAG.

lack of representations of resistance to the Ottomans in combination with the language of statehood that appears with the arrival of the Barberousse brothers suggests an acknowledgement of the Ottoman influence on modern Algeria.

Unlike the previous sections, the final section on "L'Occupation française" refuses to depict the French presence in Algeria in terms of productive cultural exchange or layering. This period saw the introduction of viticulture, which the album introduces by showing a portly European man who eats grapes while Algerians toil in the background, with the corresponding caption explaining the harm this caused to local food crops (59). Similarly, the creation of schools, hospitals, churches, and a railroad benefited only the French population, as explained via captions and depicted through an illustration of a settler family enjoying leisure time outside while the train passes in the distance and a church steeple rises into the sky (60). The lone developments, therefore, benefit the French population while further subjugating the people of Algeria.

Algerian culture, as depicted in this section, is one of resistance from the moment French troops arrived in 1830. As announced by the "grande insurrection de 1871" on the section title page (see above analysis), "L'Occupation française" consists of a series of anti-colonial conflicts, including attacks led by l'Emir Abdelkader in the early years of occupation (51-54), insurrections of 1845 (55), insurgencies by the Ouled Sidi Cheikh in 1864 (56) until 1881 (58), the insurrection of 1901 (59), and revolts during the first world war (61). The result of decades of anti-colonial sentiment and struggle gives birth to political developments in the form of nationalist movements articulating Algerian-ness and calling for liberation. The culmination of decades of work by different groups (i.e. L'étoile Nord-africaine, le Parti du people algérien, l'Union démocratique du manifeste algérien, among others) is the "déclenchement de la lutte

armée, le *1er novembre 1954*, qui marque le couronnement de toutes les formes de résistance précédents et la proclamation du *Front de libération nationale*" (63, original emphasis). This is, in fact, the last line of the album, which despite its last section's focus on conflict presents a version of Algerian history that accounts for the diversity of the people of Algeria and the rich history of this nation on which many civilizations have left their mark.

17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles

Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir's *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* can be read as a continuation of *Histoire de l'Algérie* in that it takes up where the historical saga ends—with the beginning of the Algerian War for Independence. In the same way that *Histoire de l'Algérie* conceives of a broad history of the nation both temporally (returning to prehistory) and geographically (across the Maghreb and even the Mediterranean), *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* expands the battlefield of the Algerian War to the streets of the French capital in its depiction of the police repression of an Algerian demonstration on the titular date, which has become synonymous with the event itself.

More than twenty years separate these historical albums by Abbas-Kebir, with notable political changes happening in both countries during this period. The years after the Dark Decade and the subsequent republishing of war genre comics saw the emergence of publishing houses that were not state-controlled. Although the state publisher (ENAG) still operates and the independent houses are never free of state censorship, comics creation found new avenues for creativity. In the late 1990s, the Algerian War gained prominence in the cultural conversation in France, although the war was not recognized as such until a 1999 vote by the *Assemblé nationale*

française that permitted the use of the expression "guerre d'Algérie" (Stora and Vassant 190).[152] Another event of the late 1990s brought attention to the history of October 17th: during the trial of Maurice Papon for his crimes against humanity during World War II, a "trial within a trial" emerged regarding Papon's time as Paris Prefect of Police (head of police) and his repressive role in the protest of October 17, 1961 (House and MacMaster 8).[153]

The police archives housing information on this protest-turned-repression-turned-massacre were not declassified until October of 2011, half a century after the events in question. Their inaccessibility was imposed by the French government, which sought to keep the events of this night out of the official historical record. Immediately following the massacre, the government censored the news of it and seized photographic and filmic evidence. However, censorship could not wipe the event from memory. Lia Brozgal posits that, in this instance, cultural productions in France provided an account of October 17th in lieu of an accessible and official historical archive ("In the Absence of the Archive").

Abbas-Kebir's album joins the corpus of cultural productions that engage with the state-sanctioned violence of this night. *Bande dessinée* representations of this night include Didier Daeninckx's *Meurtres pour mémoire* (1991), an adaptation of his novel of the same name, and his *Octobre noir* (2011). Published one month before the 50th anniversary, *Octobre noir* devotes more narrative space to October 17th than his previous work and provides French comics' most

[152] The expression "guerre d'Algérie" replaced that of "opérations de maintien de l'ordre" (Stora and Vassant 190).

[153] See Jim House and Neil MacMaster's monograph *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* for the history of the event and its treatment in France in the late 1990s.

extended treatment of the events.[154] The collective work *17 Octobre, 17 Illustrateurs* (2001) includes seventeen illustrations by seventeen different cartoonists—many of whom are satirists and contributors to *Charlie Hebdo*—to create a cohesive collection of political cartoons on the subject.[155] These works, like other novelistic and filmic portrayals of this event, are created and published in France.[156]

Published in Algeria in June of 2011 by Éditions Dalimen, Abbas-Kebir's album therefore expands the corpus of October 17th cultural productions to include work from Algeria while also presenting the most extensive treatment of this event in comics to date, considering that the entirety of the album is dedicated to the representation of October 17th, 1961. Furthermore, the album also expands the Algerian War Genre through its creation outside of the state-run publishers (e.g. ENAG) via Éditions Dalimen, "une maison d'édition algérienne généraliste, qui a pour ligne éditoriale le patrimoine algérien", and through its depiction of the

[154] For an analysis of Daeninckx's representations of October 17th in these works, see "Black October: Comics, Memory, and Cultural Representations of 17 October 1961" by Claire Gorrara. McKinney and Howell both examine *Octobre noir* in their respective work (*Redrawing the French Empire in Comics* 207, *The Algerian War in French-Language Comics* 52).

[155] The contributors are *bédéistes* whose work deals in postcolonial identity politics (Boudjellal and Ferrandez); political cartoonists and humorists known for contributing to *Charlie Hebdo* (Charb, Gébé, Jul, Luz, Riss, and Siné) or for tragically losing their lives in the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks (Honoré and Tignous); those who have other experience depicting October 17th (Puchol, illustrator for *Meurtres pour mémoire*, and the only female collaborator, as well as editor Mehdi Lallaoui who wrote *Une nuit d'octobre*); and the historian Benjamin Stora who frequently adds prefaces to fictional representations of French and Algerian history.

[156] Didier Daeninckx's novel *Meurtres pour mémoire* (1983), which has since been adapted into *bande dessinée*, Leila Sebbar's novel *La Seine était rouge* (1999), Mehdi Lallaoui's novel *Une nuit d'octobre* (2001), as well as Boualem Gerdjou's film *Vivre au paradis* (1999), Michael Haneke's film *Caché* (2005) are but some of the works in the October 17th corpus. The *bande dessinée* album *Dans l'ombre de Charonne* (2012) by Désirée and Alain Frappier depicts yet another manifestation turned deadly on February 8, 1962.

war outside of Algeria.[157] This second portion of the chapter explores how Abbas-Kebir reimagines this tragic night in the visual-verbal medium of comics. Paying special attention to the verbal aspect of the text as suggested by the album's subtitle, I examine how speech balloons function within this historical representation of an event that was silenced for decades. I then examine how Abbas-Kebir narrativizes the events of that night through the movement of Algerians around Paris to show that the album renders the manifestation as visually iconic as the monuments that served as its backdrop.

What's in a *bulle*?

The album's subtitle—*17 Bulles*—draws attention to the content and meaning of the seventeen speech balloons that punctuate the narrative and that I use by way of plot summary. On the album's first page, a character named Aïcha holds an Algerian flag that she displays for her husband, a character named Mouloud. In the album's first *bulle*, Aïcha asks her husband "Dis-moi Mouloud, il est beau le drapeau que je t'ai cousu pour la manif de ce soir?" (8). Next, Mouloud listens to the radio announcement that "Il est conseillé aux travailleurs algériens de s'abstenir de circuler la nuit dans les rues de Paris et de la banlieue parisienne de 20h.30 à 5h.30 du matin" (9); this suggestion reflects the historical reality of the unofficial but racist curfew that is the subject of the protest. Mouloud's son Omar asks "Où vas-tu papa?. Je viens avec toi!.." (10) as Mouloud leaves his home in the *bidonville* of Nanterre.

Mouloud meets with friends to prepare for the night, and the organizer announces that "La fédération du FLN nous impose une discipline stricte. On nous interdit le port d'armes et la

[157] This description appears on the publisher's website on the "Qui Sommes Nous" page (editions-dalimen.com/qui-sommes-nous).

réponse aux violences policiers. Ya el-khaoua soyons dignes et pacifiques!" (11). With the name of the café—"bar des amis" (11)—framing this character, the contents of his *bulle* take on an authoritative but familiar tone, complete with code-switching between French and Arabic. On the following page, the next *bulle* contains the orders to Paris police from Maurice Papon who says "Pour un coup, vous pourrez en rendre dix" (12). The book makes clear that the *manifestant*s were following the leadership of the FF FLN, and, similarly, the French police force was following orders as well. The two clearly articulated but contrasting courses of action for the night appear on opposite sides of the same page in the book, with the Algerian directives on the recto and the French directives on the verso. The proximity of the opposing directives highlights the divergence of messages presented in these *bulles*.

The entering of the city by the march of protesters prompts a police officer to say that "Les manifestants du FLN ont investi toutes les artères de la ville de Paris… Soyons prêts pour la ratonnade!" (15). The march continues into the city, and the words "Non au couvre feu!" rise up from the crowd (18). A protester takes one step too many as the police shout "Reculez!" before shooting and killing him (19); the album's first victim is Lamar Achemoune, one of only a few victims recognized by initial, official reports on the violence.[158] The scene shifts to another location and group where Mouloud, flag in hand, marches alongside a man who calls out "Vive l'Algérie indépendante!" (21). Mouloud is arrested by a police officer who snarls "Va nager raton avec ton drapeau!" (22). The next *bulle* belongs to Omar, who followed his father into the city, and asks "Papa où est tu?" before seeing his father's flag floating in the river (23).

[158] Gorrara writes that "In the immediate aftermath of the demonstration, official police reports announced three deaths (two Algerians and one 'European'), sixty-three wounded and 11,538 arrested" (130); Achemoune is one of these two Algerians. See also the article "Il y a trente ans la répression de la manifestation algérienne" from *Le Monde*: Achemoune is "l'une des deux seules victimes que le bilan officiel comptabilisera" (1991).

In the next *bulle*, police official Maurice Papon says into the phone regarding the state of events "Monsieur le ministre, les forces de police ont pu mettre fin aux agissements des manifestants… L'ordre est rétabli" (24). But the police continue with their violence, yelling out "N'approchez pas docteur!" in response to a kind bystander who implores of them, "Je suis le docteur Carpentier, laissez-moi soigner ces blessés!" (25). Other Parisians react differently to the situation: a bus driver shuts the door in the face of protesters begging "Laissez-nous monter S.V.P!.." (26), and a man at a café watches the beating of a man by the police while saying to his dinner companions "Eh bien! Ce soir, au moins, nous avons du spectacle" (27). In the final *bulle*, a cruel police officer yells down to an injured man in the river, "Arrivé au Havre, prenez à gauche pour rejoindre l'Algérie. Ha ha ha!" (31).

Analyzing the *bulles* in terms of who speaks and what is said provides a window into how Abbas-Kebir created this narrative. The breakdown of who speaks shows that French characters have more *bulles* than Algerian characters (10 French, 7 Algerian). Mouloud remains markedly silent throughout the album, especially when one considers the narrative space dedicated to Mouloud and his family. His story is rendered through images, through the narration in the captions, and through the *bulles* of others who speak to him. The caption describing his arrest states that "Parmi les manifestants, Mouloud est arrêté avec son drapeau à la main par les policiers *qui le jettent* dans la Seine" (22, my emphasis).[159] Through the use of the article *le*, it is unclear if *le drapeau* or Mouloud went into the river; but the arresting officer's racist taunt "Va nager raton avec ton drapeau!" suggests the worst (22).[160] The album spares the reader the sight of Mouloud (or his flag from Aïcha, for that matter) being thrown into the Seine (see Figure

[159] I changed the original "jetent" to "jettent" so as not to distract from meaning.

[160] This frame also appears on the title page of the album.

25).[161] Movement lines show the force of the officer's action, which results in water splashing upwards, drawing the reader's eye above the police office to the onomatopoeia of "AAAAAAH" that hovers in the air. Mouloud's scream is his only utterance in the album, but it is as onomatopoeia rather than a *bulle*.

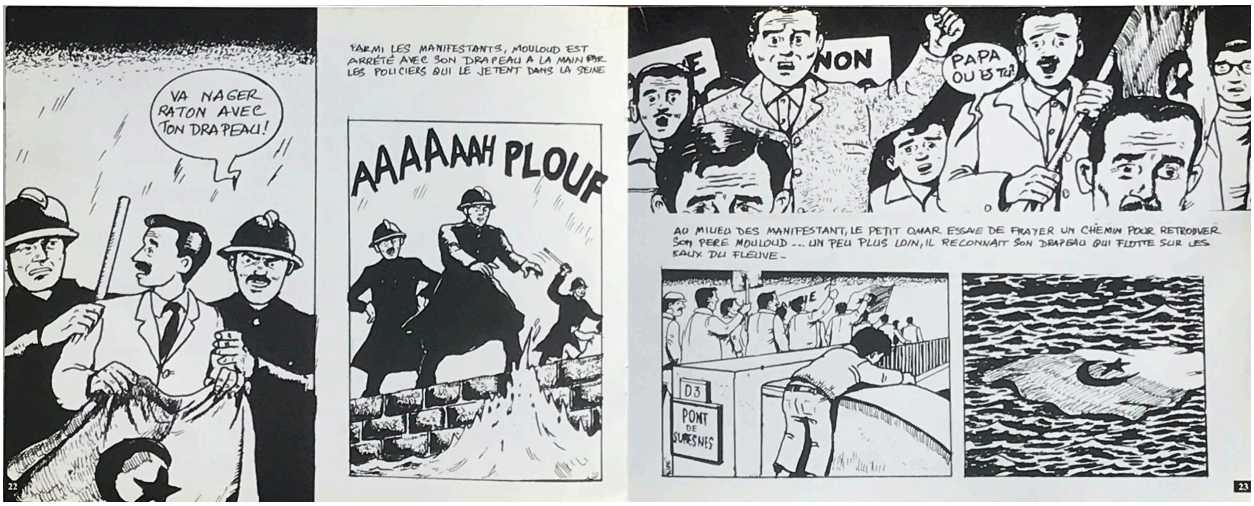

Figure 25: This spread shows the scenes depicting Mouloud's encounter with the police and Omar's search for his father (*17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* 22-23).

The next page takes up the question of Mouloud's fate when the words "Papa où est tu?" appear among a group of protesters (23). Unbeknownst to the reader until this point in the narrative, Omar followed his father toward the city. Omar's question here evokes his previous question to Mouloud: "Où vas-tu papa?. Je viens avec toi!.." (10). Both of the boy's questions are unanswered by Mouloud, to whom the text fails to allot any *bulles*. This scene does provide some answers regarding Omar's attempt to "frayer un chemin pour retrouver son père Mouloud… Un peu plus loin, il reconnaît son drapeau qui flotte sur les eaux du fleuve" (23),

[161] The image in Figure 25 is a photograph I took of *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles*; this is the case for all figures featuring images from this text.

which is depicted visually below this caption (see Figure 25). One frame depicts the boy leaning over the Pont de Suresnes (see analysis below)—which is clearly identified as such by a sign drawn onto the bridge in this illustration—as the crowd continues on their march over the bridge in the background (23). The next frame depicts the flag in the river from the point of view of the boy (23). Displayed in flying position, intact and unfurled with its back to the water, the flag recognizable to Omar as the one carried by his father and made by his mother.

Mouloud's story reflects the historical reality of that night's Algerian causalities, "évalué à des dizaines de milliers de morts, des milliers de blessés et d'arrestations" (Abbas-Kebir 33). This main character's silence—i.e. he does not speak in any of the titular *bulles*—seems symbolic in this text that recounts the history of a massacre that was silenced for decades. Rather than reading this silent character as repressing the story, Mouloud is symbolic of a larger silencing of October 17th and its surrounding violence in the national narrative of France. The visibility of his violent death in the text reflects the visibility of the massacre, which calls attention to the forces behind the suppression of facts and records about the night. The character of Omar points to the impact of these events across generations. That the album frames the scene depicting Omar in Paris as visually and temporally separate from any violence (see Figure 25) installs him in the post-memory generation; he does not witness the traumatic event in question (his father's death and, broadly, the massacre) but its aftermath. I use post-memory as conceived by Marianne Hirsch in regard to generational memory in this visual-verbal medium in "Family Pictures: Maus, Mourning, and Post-Memory".[162] He represents the generations of kids who were raised with the (post-)memories of the events of October 17th as well as its silencing. It is

[162] Hirsch's concept of post-memory is initially explored in her article "Family Pictures: Maus, Mourning, and Post-Memory" from *Discourse* and has been expanded upon by Hirsch and others in the field of memory studies.

their questioning of the past that led to the creation of cultural productions engaging with the massacre in a way that the historical record did not.

The albums' reimagining of this collective experience combines the story of Mouloud (a fictional character) with the stories of Lamar Achemoune, Mohamed Badache, Medjouli Lalou, Mohamed Trachi, and Hassan Boulenouar—actual victims of the October 17th violence. Of these renderings of historical accounts, Trachi and Boulenouar's stories are accompanied by the narrative's only explicit reference to source material.[163] Abbas-Kebir acknowledges the role of these sources within the text of the album, writing:

> Les auteurs Michel Levine et Paulette Péju livrent dans leurs ouvrages des témoignages poignants sur les massacres de Paris:
>
> Mohamed Trachi assommé et précipité dans la Seine au pont de Suresnes.
>
> Hassan Boulenouar, battu et jeté dans la Seine face au jardin de Notre Dame, sous le regard haineux et l'air ironique des policiers. (31)

Paulette Péju's *Ratonnades à Paris* (1961) and Michel Levine's *Les Ratonnades d'octobre: un meurtre collectif à Paris en 1961* (1985) are early attempts to record and disseminate the events of that night; Péju's book was promptly seized and censored.[164] Both books privilege eyewitness accounts, which, in turn, Abbas-Kebir reinscribes in the medium of *bande dessinée*. The above caption appears across the top of the page but divided into two columns, with Mohamed Trachi's

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[163] Lamar Achemoune, one of the few officially recognized victims of that night (a fact that is not acknowledged in the album), appears early in the narrative (19). The album does not acknowledge that Badache's story begins with his arrest before the manifestation (see the series of articles from *Le Monde* from 1961 or *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* by Jim House and Neil MacMaster 110).

[164] Péju's book was republished in the twentieth century. See Paulette Péju's *Ratonnades à Paris* (La Découverte 2000) and Michel Levine's *Les Ratonnades d'octobre: un meurtre collectif à Paris en 1961* (Ramsay 1985).

account on the left and Hassan Boulenouar's on the right. This continues the two-column configuration of both pages in this spread (see Figure 26), with the stories of Mohamed Badache and Medjouli Lalou appearing on the verso, placing them close to but before the reference to source material (31).

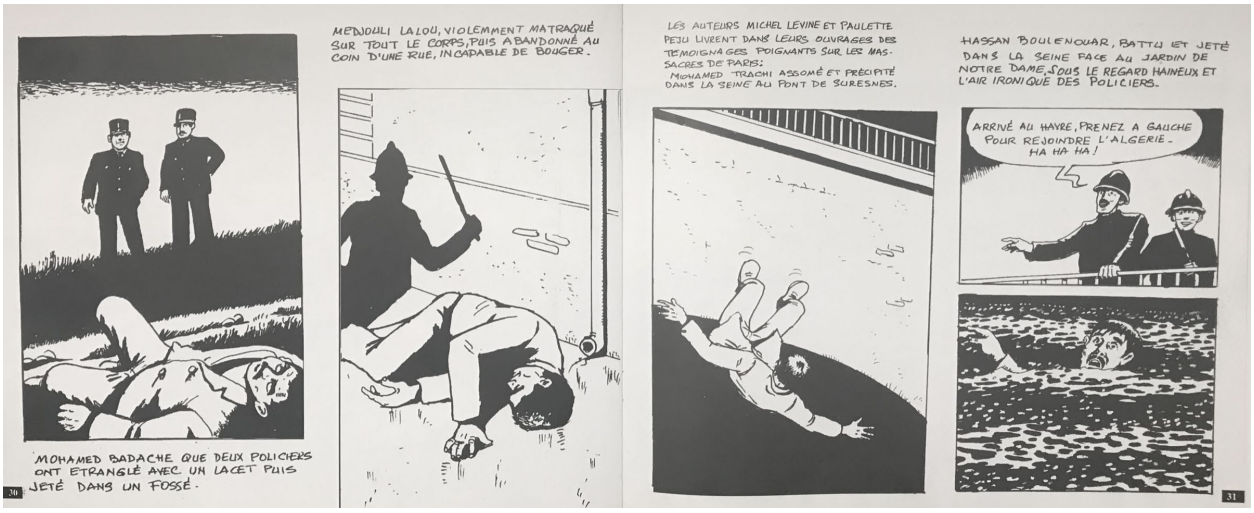

Figure 26: This spread shows the accounts of Mohamed Badache and Medjouli Lalou [left] and Mohamed Trachi and Hassan Boulenouar [right] (*17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* 30-31).

Breaking with the spread's distribution of accounts per page, Hassan Boulenouar's story is told through the images in both columns on this page, on which the illustrations depict Boulenouar's body falling from the bridge, then the police officers on the bridge, and finally Boulenouar's head and hand emerging from the water. The distinct railing at the top of the bridge, in combination with the location as stated in the caption ("jeté dans la Seine face au jardin de Notre Dame"), depicts the Pont au Double, although the bridge is not named in the album. The caption's description of "le regard haineux et l'air ironique des policiers" is depicted visually on the smiling faces of the two officers, one of whom taunts the victim saying, "Arrivé

au Havre, prenez à gauche pour rejoindre l'Algérie. Ha ha ha!" (31).[165] In addition to setting his account apart on the page, the presence of a *bulle* in this scene attributed to "témoignages poignants" suggests that these cruel words were indeed uttered to Hassan Boulenouar that night.

This caustic tone appears in another instance of witness testimony turned written record turned *bulle*. The subject of this verbal abuse is again an Algerian victim whose fate is mocked by a French character for the enjoyment of another French character. Here, a man at a café says to his dinner companions "Eh bien! Ce soir, au moins, nous avons du spectacle" whose enjoyment of the crude comment is shown in the smiles on their faces (27). Seated outside at a café, they face the street where an Algerian man is on his knees under the raised arm of a police officer wielding a baton over his head mid-strike. The adjacent frame depicts the arrest of this man with Notre Dame serving as the backdrop. Violence is treated as dinner theater in this conversation, which was overheard by a French woman whose testimony was recorded by another French woman. First published in *Le Monde* in 1991, this citation appears again in Anne Tristan's preface to *17 Octobre, 17 Illustrateurs* (Tristan 17).[166] The album makes no mention of this source material. Nonetheless, set in the Quartier Latin at a café—a quintessentially Parisian place for people watching—this scene calls attention to the visibility of the protest and its repression on October 17th.

Movement and Monuments

In addition to the aforementioned stories of named Algerians—e.g. Mouloud (a fictional

[165] This taunt also appears in the cartoon by Tignous in *17 Illustrateurs*, but Tignous draws the laughter as coming from other officers.

[166] The article from 1991 is available online (www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1991/10/20/il-y-a-trente-ans-la-repression-de-la-manifestation-algerienne-a-paris_4036999_1819218.html).

character) and Hassan Boulenouar (who shares his name with a historical referent)—the album presents the events of the night as a collective Algerian experience. Depictions of the crowd marching in peaceful protest take up much of the narrative, and drawn into the crowds are images of the Algerian flag as well as banners and signs bearing the slogans "Oui à l'indépendance de l'Algérie" (13), "Algérie algérienne" (14, 18), "Algérie indépendante" (16), "Vive l'Algérie" (16, 21), "Vive l'Algérie libre" (16), and "Non au couvre feu" (16, 18, 23). The album clarifies that the silencing of this generation's experiences has not rendered them voiceless; Algerian demonstrators call out "Non au couvre feu!" (18) and "Vive l'Algérie indépendante!" (21) as heard within the diegesis in *bulles* and shown on banners and signs carried by the crowd. In the album, their method of protest (moving through the city) embodies the issue they are protesting (the attempt to control Algerian movement in certain spaces through a curfew). In *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory*, Jim House and Neil MacMaster explain the motivations of the peaceful march that night, writing that a "key objective of the FLN organizers was, through an 'invasion' of the city centre by three massive columns, to break the *spatial segregation* imposed on the immigrant workers, a segregation that had been reinforced by violent police repression and, since 5 October, by a discriminatory night-time curfew imposed uniquely on Algerian workers" (1, my emphasis). The album, therefore, depicts the invasion of Paris by tracing the movement of Algerians in and around the city of Paris in order to narrativize the events of that night.

The scene that depicts protesters crossing the Pont de Neuilly marks a turning point in the narrative. This spread uses multiple framings to depict this moment when a group of Algerian protesters meets a group of Parisian police (see Figure 27). The verso contains two tiers: the top tier, framed through a medium long shot, shows the Algerian protesters walking across a bridge

toward the reader (16.1); the bottom tier shows the same image as framed through an extreme long shot to reveal the water below the bridge as well as the police officers who run toward the bridge with their backs to the reader (16.2), while an encrusted frame provides a close up of the shocked faces of the police (16.3). The caption supplements the images, stating that "Entre 19h30 et 20h, une première vague de manifestants descend vers *le Pont de Neuilly*… C'est ici que se produit le premier choc…" (16, original emphasis). The extreme long shot that frames the meeting of the two groups draws the reader's attention as it is the album's only example of this framing, which often functions as an establishing shot. Here, it signals a change in action—from peace to violence. That the peaceful march across the bridge is duplicated on this page emphasizes the violence that follows. The recto contains one caption box and one image: the caption stating that "Les différents convois de manifestants sont violemment tabassés par la police en utilisant des matraques, des bidules et des barres de fer" (17) appears above a splash panel, framed through a medium long shot, shows the entangled bodies of protesters and police, with the protesters' light-colored suits contrasting against the police force's dark uniforms, boots, and helmets (17).

Not only depicting the first meeting of the two groups—described here as "le premier choc"—and the ensuing violence, this scene points to the album's tendency to locate the action using recognizable landmarks or monuments. Named in the caption, the Pont de Neuilly serves as the scene's landmark and provides insight into the violence that takes place here. The caption gives context to the image that fails to provide cause for the Paris police, who are drawn running with their batons raised above their heads toward the protesters, who are rendered collectively as a mass of motionless bodies on the bridge. Located north-west of the French capitol, this bridge crosses the Seine and serves as a main entry point into the city. The mere presence of protesters

on the Pont de Neuilly challenged the notions of who belonged in the space of the city, therefore breaking the "spatial segregation"—to employ House and MacMaster's phrasing—imposed on Algerians in France.

In fact, it is a straight shot from the *bidonville* of Nanterre over the Pont de Neuilly to the Arc de Triomphe down the Avenue des Champs-Élysées to the Place de la Concorde's obelisk to the Jardin des Tuileries and into the first *arrondissement* or the heart of Paris. Despite the geographical reality that this route does not pass by la Tour Eiffel, the album visually links this scene to this monument. The image depicting the entanglement of protesters and police that occupies all of this spread's recto (17) appears again in the cover art of this softcover album (see Figure 27). The composition of the cover positions this police violence spanning the bottom half of the page (with the publisher's logo layered onto this image), the Tour Eiffel on the right hand side of the page, rising up from the violence and serving as its backdrop, and the author-artist's name and album title to the left of the monument. All of this is in black and white, while the cover itself is a dark maroon color. Similarly, the back cover depicts the crossing of the Pont de Neuilly in black and white against a field of maroon.[167] While the back cover repeats the art as depicted within the narrative, the front cover inserts the Eiffel Tower into the art. One of the most recognizable structures in the world, the Eiffel Tower serves as visual synecdoche for Paris or even France. It locates the album's setting in Paris and announces the importance of

[167] This image of the back cover shows the price tag for the album, which I purchased in Paris at the *Institut du Monde Arabe*. All images of the album in this dissertation are photographs I took from this copy of the album.

monuments in understanding the visibility of the massacre that took place that night.[168]

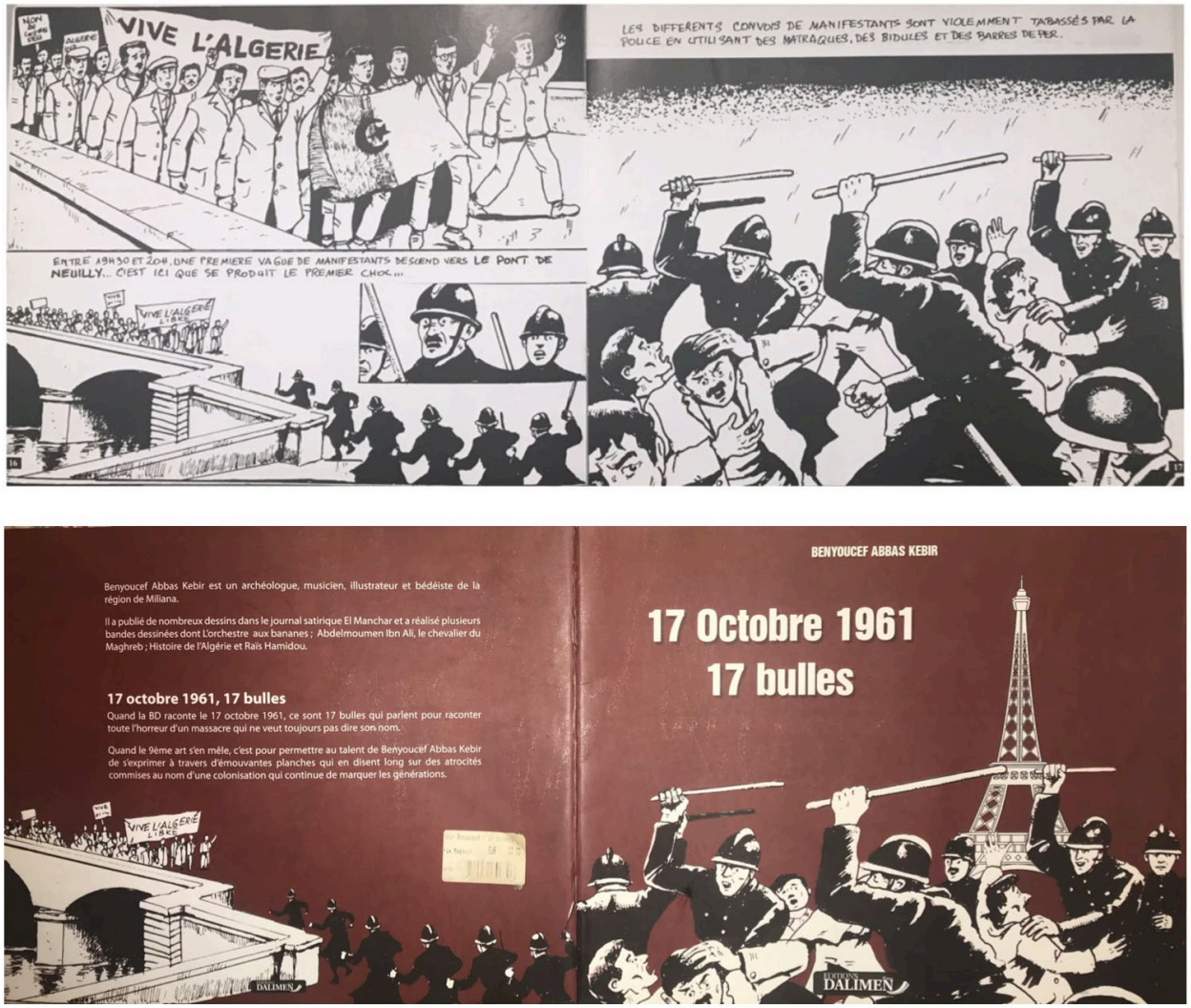

Figure 27: The spread showing the first meeting of protesters and police is replicated, in part, on the album's covers (*17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* 16-17, cover art).

[168] The album depicts or describes many famous sites in and around Paris, including: monuments such as la Tour Eiffel (cover), Arc de Triomphe (13), and Notre Dame (27); bridges like Pont de Neuilly (14), Pont Neuf d'Argenteuil (14), Pont de Suresnes (23, 31), Pont au Change (29), and Pont au Double (31); streets including les Champs Élysées (13), le boulevard Saint Michel (13), le boulevard Saint Germain (13), and le boulevard la Bonne Nouvelle (14); and other places such as Nanterre (10), le Cinéma Rex (25), la Place Saint-Germain (26), le Quartier Latin (27), Palais des Sports (32), and Stade Courbetin (32).

The cover's depiction of la Tour Eiffel, the visibility of atrocities in the Quartier Latin, and the significance of the city's recognizable landmarks and structures all point to the album's agenda of "seeing" France through the history of its colonial past, to employ Hannah Feldman's notion that Paris as a site of modern art and modern subjectivity invites us to see the capital and the state through other visual histories.[169] Another Port de Paris used to access—or to invade—the city in the album is the aforementioned Pont de Suresnes, which the album identifies as the place where Mohamed Trachi is thrown into the river and where Omar realizes his father is gone (31, 23). As the site of Omar's seeing his father's flag in the river, the geography of the Pont de Suresnes begs a closer look. The Pont de Suresnes is located to the west of Paris and near Omar's home in Nanterre; it is south of the Pont de Neuilly. The reader knows that Mouloud was thrown into the river with his flag, but the location is not named. The fact that the flag passes under the Pont de Suresnes suggests that Mouloud marched—likely over the Pont de Neuilly—into the city center where he was thrown into the river whose current then swept his body away from the city to the west. The reader must think through the geography of the city to understand the horror of this scene. Bridges in the heart of the city, such as the Pont au Double where Hassan Boulenouar entered the river (31), also represent sites of violence in the album. The repeated imagery of the Seine and the many bridges that cross it remind the reader of the violence that took place on these bridges throughout the city and the lives that were lost in the waters of the river that snakes across Paris, some of whom remain unaccounted for while others' cause of death was listed only as drowning by bullets.

Following the many illustrations of and references to bridges, the final image of a bridge

[169] Hannah Feldman builds upon Dipesh Chakrabarty and Achille Mbembe's ideas of making visible colonial interventions in France (7); for an analysis of visual culture during the war, see Feldman's *From a Nation Torn: Decolonizing Art and Representation in France, 1945-1962*.

in the album appears in the form of a photograph. Taken in the weeks following 17 October 1961, the now infamous photograph depicts a bridge on which the inscription "Ici on noie les Algériens" appears as graffiti. In their article on the political life of the graffiti, Vincent Lemire and Yann Potin identify its location, writing that:

> Sans rien montrer du massacre, cette photographie témoigne avant tout d'une réaction politique. Son arrière-plan permet de localiser l'inscription: on aperçoit à gauche la lourde silhouette du Louvre, et à droite le clocher de l'église Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois (voir documents 1 et 10). Nous sommes donc sur la rive gauche, à l'est du pont des Arts; les projecteurs accrochés au lampadaire sont dirigés vers la coupole de l'Institut de France. Le cadrage de la photographie ne permet pas de distinguer la Seine elle-même, suggérée cependant par la perspective des quais. (143)[170]

The location is confirmed by recent journalistic endeavors that shed light on the graffiti's creation and photography.[171] In a 2019 interview, Jean-Michel Mension, one of the graffiti artists, describes how he walked along the Quai de Conti in search of an appropriate location for this inscription then decided on its symbolic placement near l'Institut de France and le Pont Saint-Michel; he explains his motivations, saying that "Quand on a appris ce qui s'était passé le 17 octobre, on s'est dit qu'il fallait faire quelque chose, qu'il fallait réagir, marquer le coup"

[170] For a detailed analysis of the graffiti, see Lemire and Potin's article "Ici on noie les Algériens: Fabriques documentaires, avatars politiques et mémoires partagées d'une icône militante (1961-2001)" *Genèses*, 49, 4, 2002, pp. 140-162.

[171] See the article in *France Culture* by Elsa Mourgues titled "Ici, on noie les Algériens: La photo mémoire du massacre du 17 octobre 1961" (23 August 2019) as well as the accompanying YouTube video. Texier describes how he took the photograph to *L'Humanité* that day; although they rejected the image at the time, it appeared on the front page of *L'Humanité* in 1986. Texier holds the rights to the photograph, and he was accompanied by Claude Angeli when it was taken; both men were "photographes du journal communiste l'Avant-Garde" (Mourgues 2019).

(Mourgues). Jean Texier, the photographer, describes how he stumbled across the scene, took the photograph quickly since the graffiti was guarded by "les flics", and that the graffiti was removed only hours later. Despite the graffiti's fleeting appearance in Paris in 1961, it nevertheless stood as a visible testimony to the events before becoming a photograph that has since been replicated in other cultural productions.[172]

Of the many prominent monuments, avenues, landmarks, bridges, and places that appear in the pages of Abbas-Kebir's album, le Pont Saint-Michel is noticeably absent, especially considering the role of this location as a known site from which Algerian *manifestants* were thrown to their deaths by the police. In 2001, when the mayor of Paris dedicated a plaque "À la mémoire des nombreux algériens tués lors de la sanglante répression de la manifestation pacifique du 17 octobre 1961", it was placed ceremoniously at the Pont Saint-Michel.[173] Or perhaps the attention given to Pont Saint-Michel is the very reason for its absence in the album, as the materiality of the album itself provides space for an Algerian dedication to the memory of the Algerian lives lost that night.

Conclusion: Toward a long history of the Algerian War

This chapter demonstrates that *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* can and should be read as a continuation of *Histoire de l'Algérie*. Not only does *Histoire de l'Algérie* culminate at the eve of

[172] The photograph appears on the cover of Yasmina Adi's film *Ici on noie les Algériens* (2011) which treats the events of this night.

[173] As Lemire and Potin, among others, have specified, the location of the plaque is the on the Quai du Marché Neuf next to Pont Saint-Michel (142). See Philippe Bernard and Christine Garin's "Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle" *Le Monde* (17 October 2001) for more on the ceremony and the plaque (www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2011/10/17/archives-du-monde-17-octobre-2001-le-massacre-du-17-octobre-1961-obtient-un-debut-de-reconnaissance-officielle_1588198_3224.html).

the fight for independence, it provides a chronological record of the people who invaded, passed through, or otherwise influenced Algerian culture and its spirit of resistance. Keeping this historical context in mind, *17 Octobre 1961* presents a sort of reversal of who moves and where. It places Algerians in the heart of the French capital, where they are drawn onto a backdrop of iconic monuments in order to show that Algerian history involves and has influenced French culture as well.

Taking into account Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir's decades-long career in historical representation in *bande dessinée*, his work at the *musée de l'Emir Abdelkader* in Miliana, and his training as an archeologist, it seems that his work could be considered both a "fouille" (archeological dig) and a curation of images of history in *Histoire de l'Algérie* and *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles*, respectively. Both albums are devoted to the geography of the places in question that, in turn, are replete with drawings of the architecture, monuments, and landmarks for which they are known. With iconic backdrops like the walled city of Algiers or the cafés of the Latin Quarter in Paris, these works narrativize what would otherwise be a series of historical events or facts. The medium of *bande dessinée* is also particularly well adapted to spatializing violence, which is seen throughout both albums via their penchant for placemaking and signaling of sites of tragedy that create cartographies of violence within their pages.

Reading *Histoire de l'Algérie* and *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* together affords a new understanding of how the medium and historical representation converge, whether it is thanks to or in spite of the myriad differences between these works. *Histoire de l'Algérie* chronicles the long history of Algeria and creates a cohesive narrative of Algerian-ness that runs throughout history; the effect of which is a portrait of a mythical Algeria that predates the war of independence that gave birth to the nation state. *17 Octobre 1961* tells of the tragedy of a

peaceful protest turned repression turned massacre to render this disputed episode of Algerian history visible and voiced for an Algerian readership. Together, these albums underscore the Algerian sprit of resistance throughout history and point toward a long history of the Algerian War—one that began with resistance to invasion and colonization by the Romans among others, and one that does not yet have an end. The long history of the Algerian War of Independence continues to affect generations of Algerians long after the ceasefire declared by the Evian Accords. Benyoucef Abbas-Kebir's *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* demonstrates that the subject of the Algerian War remains relevant and continues to provide fodder for cultural productions so long as it remains disputed in national narratives and official historical records.

CONCLUSION

The changing Algerian political climate and the Algerian War Genre

Algerian *bande dessinée* trades in the political—in terms of what is represented and also in terms of the context of their creation. This is particularly true in the case of the Algerian War Genre. Representing the war often involves an alignment with the official narrative that praised the FLN and lionized the ALN during the war in order to legitimize the FLN's single-party rule post-independence. The degree to which *bédéistes* willingly or willfully supported this narrative is debatable and is, in fact, dependent on the context of creation rather than individual cartoonists' political leanings, which are often unknown to the reader. Taking into consideration what Stephen Neale recognizes as the historical character of all genres ("Questions of Genre" 187), this project demonstrates how situating works in the moment in history when they were created can shed light on the question of their alignment with the official narrative as well as the factors encouraging such a political alignment. The project also considers that politics and historical representation are intertwined throughout the nation's history, although their relationship manifests to different extents based on the decade.

A strength of the project is that it provides a cross-format and cross-decade examination of the Algerian War Genre in order to trace the genre over time in the work of individual cartoonists who are studied in their respective chapters. The *bande dessinée* examined in this project illustrate the interconnectedness of the FLN's ideology and the medium's various stages of development in the decades after independence. The magazine *M'Quidèch* defined *bande dessinée* publishing during the decade of the 1970s when the FLN's vision of the war was ensured through strict guidelines imposed by SNED under the presidency of Houari

Boumédienne (1965-1978), the 2nd President of Algeria and former FLN colonel who overthrew the FLN leader turned first Algerian president Ahmed Ben Bella (1963-1965). The decade of the 1980s is characterized by *albums de bande dessinée*—e.g. *De nos montagnes*, *Les hommes du djebel*, *Le village oublié*, and *Histoire de l'Algérie*—that were created and produced under the watchful eye of state-run publishers and editors SNED and ENAL during the presidency of former ALN/FLN colonel Chadli Bendjedid (1978-92), the 3rd President of Algeria.

The 1990s are known as the Dark Decade. By the end of the 1980s, the worldwide crash in oil prices caused an economic recession in Algeria that generated social unrest and protests like the October Riots of 1988, after which President Bendjedid introduced a multi-party system through the adoption of a new constitution that allowed for the formation of political parties other than the FLN. The elections in 1991 favored *Le Front islamique du salut* (FIS), but authorities intervened and canceled the election for fear of an Islamist government. Bendjedid resigned the presidency in 1992 and was replaced by the High Council of State, a collective acting Presidency, which banned *Le Front islamique du salut* (FIS) and its armed branch, *l'Armée islamique du salut*. Although the FLN was not the single party of this time, the party's influence should be noted in the High Council of State, which lasted from 1992 until 1999 and was led by three different Chairmen, or acting presidents: Mohamed Boudiaf, one of the original founders of the FLN, followed by Ali Hussain Kafi and Liamine Zéroual, both of whom fought for the ALN.[174] In terms of publishing, the Dark Decade is marked by a lack of *bande dessinée* in favor of political cartoons and caricatures that appeared following the end of the single-party system.

[174] Mohamed Boudiaf was Chairman from 16 January 1992 to 29 June 1992; Ali Hussain Kafi was Chairman from 2 July 1992 to 31 January 1994; and Liamine Zéroual was Chairman from 16 November 1995 to 27 April 1999.

In 1999, Algeria resumed presidential elections, and FLN-candidate Abdelaziz Bouteflika (1999-2019) was elected president. The end of the Dark Decade and the new version of the FLN regime brought about a revival of *bande dessinée* in Algeria through two efforts, the first of which is the early 21st-century revival of the medium that occurred through the re-edition of albums by state editor ENAG in 2002 and 2003—including *Les hommes du djebel*, *Histoire de l'Algérie*, and *Le journal de M'Quidèch*. Although ENAG's reasons for choosing to republish some albums over others remains unknown to me, it is safe to assume that the editor for the state sought out texts that aligned with the FLN's ideology. The re-publications nevertheless circulated for a new Algerian readership who was not yet born when the texts debuted in the 1980s. The second revitalization effort by the Ministère de la Culture was the 2008 creation of the *Festival international de la bande dessinée d'Alger* (FIBDA), an aspect of which was the formation of new, independent publishers like Éditions Dalimen that issued new war stories like *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles*.

On the occasion of the 2013 exposition on Algerian *bande dessinée* at Angoulême, France's long-running premier festival on the medium, Didier Pasamonik interviewed Dalila Nadjem, the director of the FIBDA. When asked the question "Peut-on tout publier dans votre pays? Y-a-t-il une censure?", Dalila Nadjem gave the following response:

> Est-ce qu'il existe au monde un pays où l'on peut tout publier? Je ne le pense pas, y compris dans des pays de vieille démocratie. Mais s'agissant de la censure, vous serez étonné sans doute quand vous viendrez à l'exposition d'Angoulême et que vous verrez les tabous qui sont tombés […] Bien sûr, il y a des limites connues comme l'interdiction de blasphémer qui concerne d'ailleurs non seulement l'Islam, mais les autres religions. Ce n'est pas en Algérie que vous verrez une BD ou des caricatures de Moïse ou Jésus,

> d'autant que le Coran les reconnaît en tant que Prophètes de son message. Sinon quoi? La politique? Jetez un œil sur les dessins de presse dans les journaux algériens indépendants. Personne n'est épargné à quelque niveau que ce soit. Le monde de l'édition a beaucoup évolué. La littérature paraît aujourd'hui avec des audaces que je vous invite à découvrir et qui touchent à quasiment tout. (*ActuaBD* 2013)[175]

Initially couching her answer to the question of censorship in a rhetorical question, Dalila Nadjem paints picture of a progressive Algerian publishing scene whose limits primarily concern blasphemous religious iconography. By discussing the blasphemous representation of religion, Nadjem invokes an international debate on how European *bande dessinée* treat Islam—including the controversial Muhammed cartoons in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten in 2005 and the ongoing debates on the representation of Islam in the French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*—that would come to a head in the years following this interview with the 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* attacks.[176] In stating that Algerians not only avoid blasphemy against Islam, but against any religion, Nadjem places the ethics of Algerian *bande dessinée* on a higher moral ground than their European counterparts. The seemingly relaxed censorship of *bande dessinée* following the first FIBDA combined with the advent of albums like *17 Octobre 1961, 17 Bulles* that redraw contested historical moments (although representing October 17th in Algeria is far less controversial than in the French context) suggest that the publishing landscape is changing in Algeria.

This brings us to Algeria's current political climate. On April 2nd, 2019, President

[175] See the interview for more on the exposition at Angoulême in 2013.

[176] Jane Weston discusses the evolution of the representation of Islam in *Charlie Hebdo* as part of the publication's "bête et méchant" aesthetic (2009).

Abdelaziz Bouteflika resigned the presidency as a result of nationwide weeks-long mass protests about his term limit after the FLN announced that Bouteflika would run for a fifth term despite lingering health issues that have kept the octogenarian out of the public eye for years. *Le Monde* has reported that journalists were arrested for documenting the protests and were accused of attempting to provide images of the protests to foreign media outlets ("Algérie: huit mois de prison pour un journaliste arrêté dans le cadre du Hirak"). Bouteflika symbolizes the FLN's long reign as well as an elite group of individuals in various positions of power during their lifelong political careers.[177] A year after his resignation, Bouteflika is gone from office, but the corruption that marked his reign remains. *Al Jazeera* reported that many of Bouteflika's cronies have faced prosecution since his resignation, including his brother and two former intelligence chiefs for conspiring against the state, and two former prime ministers close to Bouteflika for corruption, among other political and business leaders from his circle ("Algeria since Bouteflika Resigned in Face of Mass Protests").

A member of the centrist political party *Rassemblement National Démocratique* (RND), parliamentary president Abdelkader Bensalah served as Acting Head of State after the resignation in April 2019 until Abdelmadjid Tebboune was elected president in December 2019. The former Prime Minister and Minister of Housing, Abdelmadjid Tebboune won 58% of the votes in the 2019 Algerian presidential election, running as an independent against candidates from both of Algeria's main political parties—the FLN and the RND. Although it is too soon to tell, Abdelghani Aichoun quickly responded in *El Watan* with speculation that this is the

[177] Bouteflika joined the ALN at age nineteen *en pleine guerre*, and he held various government positions from 1962 until 2019, including Minister for Youth and Sport under Ben Bella, Minister for Foreign Affairs under Boumédienne, and as a main player in Boumédienne's coup of Ben Bella (Charlotte Bozonnet et al. *Le Monde* 2019).

beginning of the end for the powerful FLN and RND ("FLN et RND: La fin des partis du pouvoir"). While Tebboune's election signals a change in the political party of Algeria's president, the politician served as Prime Minister under the ousted Bouteflika. Furthermore, the election was rejected by Hirak who saw it as an attempt to reinstate the old guard of elite Algerian politicians and businessmen, according to *Al Jazeera* ("Abdelmadjid Tebboune: Who is Algeria's new president?" and "Defiant Algerian Protesters Reject December Presidential Vote").

The resignation that terminated Abdelaziz Bouteflika's 20-year presidency, the mass protests by antiregime movement Hirak, and the election of independent candidate Abdelmadjid Tebboune usher in a new, unprecedented era of Algerian politics. Throughout the history of independent Algeria—which is, in turn, the history of the Algerian *bande dessinée*—shifts in the political climate have similarly engendered shifts in *bande dessinée* production. It is therefore reasonable to speculate that the current political moment will alter the way that *bande dessinée* represents the nation's history as well as the mechanisms behind their publication. Excluding the Dark Decade, the FLN has dominated Algerian politics since 1962 and has influenced, to varying degrees, how the war for independence is depicted in *bande dessinée*. Now that the FLN's rule has ended (whether temporarily or to lasting affect) it remains to be seen how *bande dessinée* will treat this historic era in Algerian politics. Finally, because the Algerian War Genre—the concept I have formulated and investigated in this project—has thus far proven to be an enduring hallmark of the medium, the assumption can be made that the Algerian War Genre will endure and even flourish as Algerians navigate the new political landscape in the wake of the FLN's six-decade regime.

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